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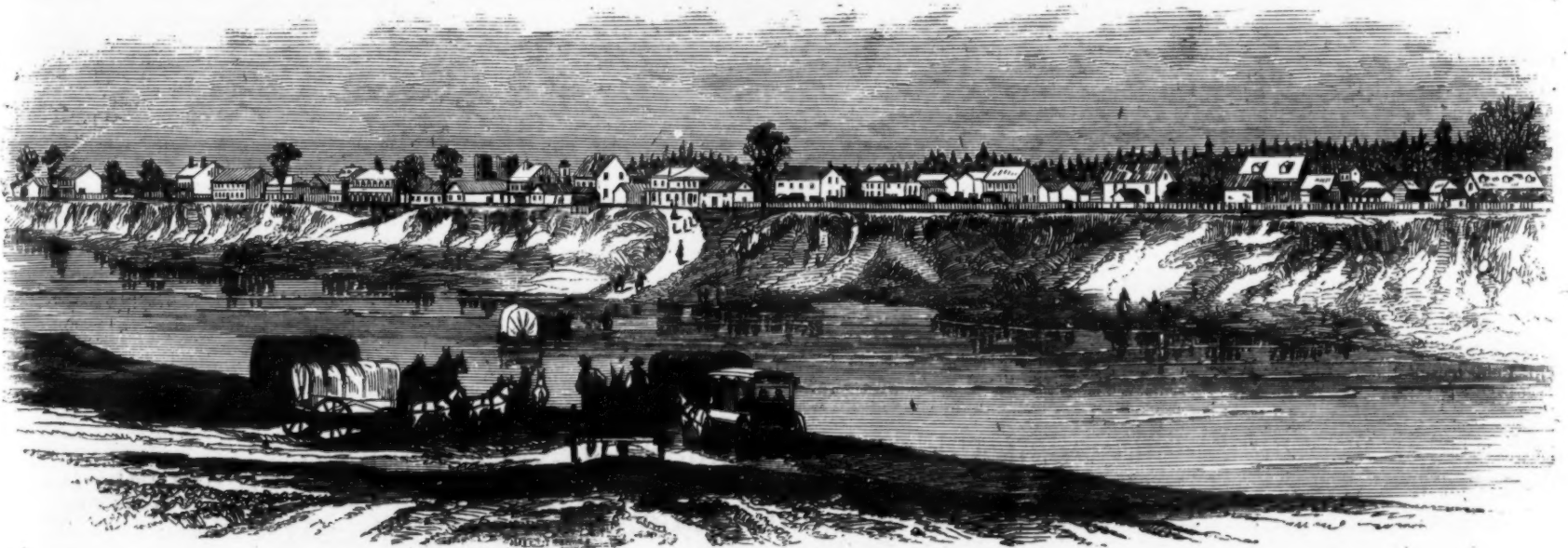
NEWSPAPER

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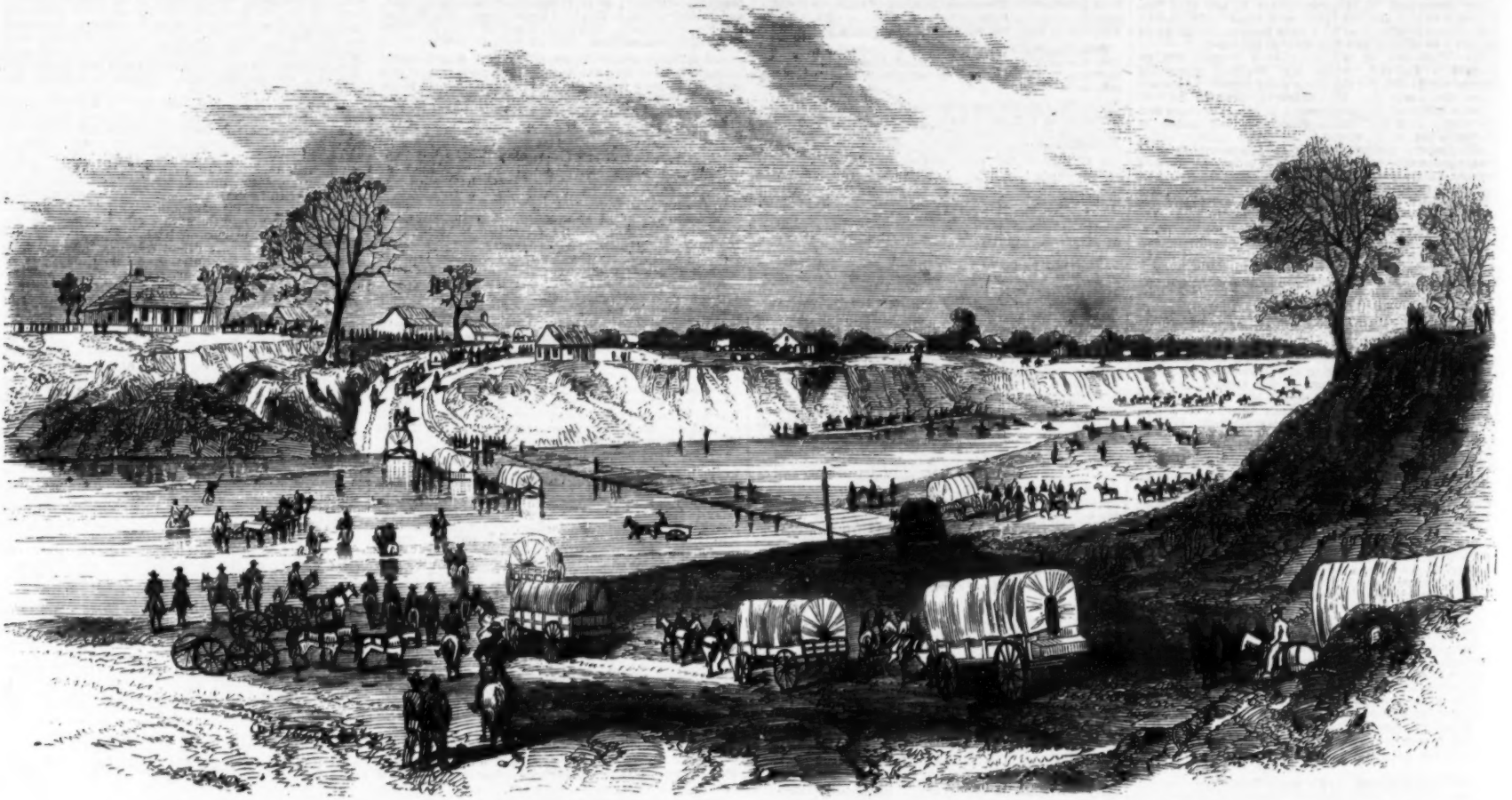


THE WAR IN LOUISIANA—VIEW OF NATCHITOCHES.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, C. E. H. DORRILL.—SEE PAGE 102.



and a pretty woman.

Saturday, the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth, great things were done in all the theatres for the benefit of the Dramatic Fund, and to raise money for a statue to the bard in Central Park. The most prominent of these great things was "Romeo and Juliet" at Winter Garden, with Edwin Booth as Romeo, Avonja Jones as Juliet, and Edwin James, late *Queen's Counsel*, and now of our own bar, as



THE WAR IN LOUISIANA—GEN. LEE'S CAVALRY FORDING CANE RIVER, MARCH 31.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, C. E. H. DONWILL.—SEE PAGE 102.

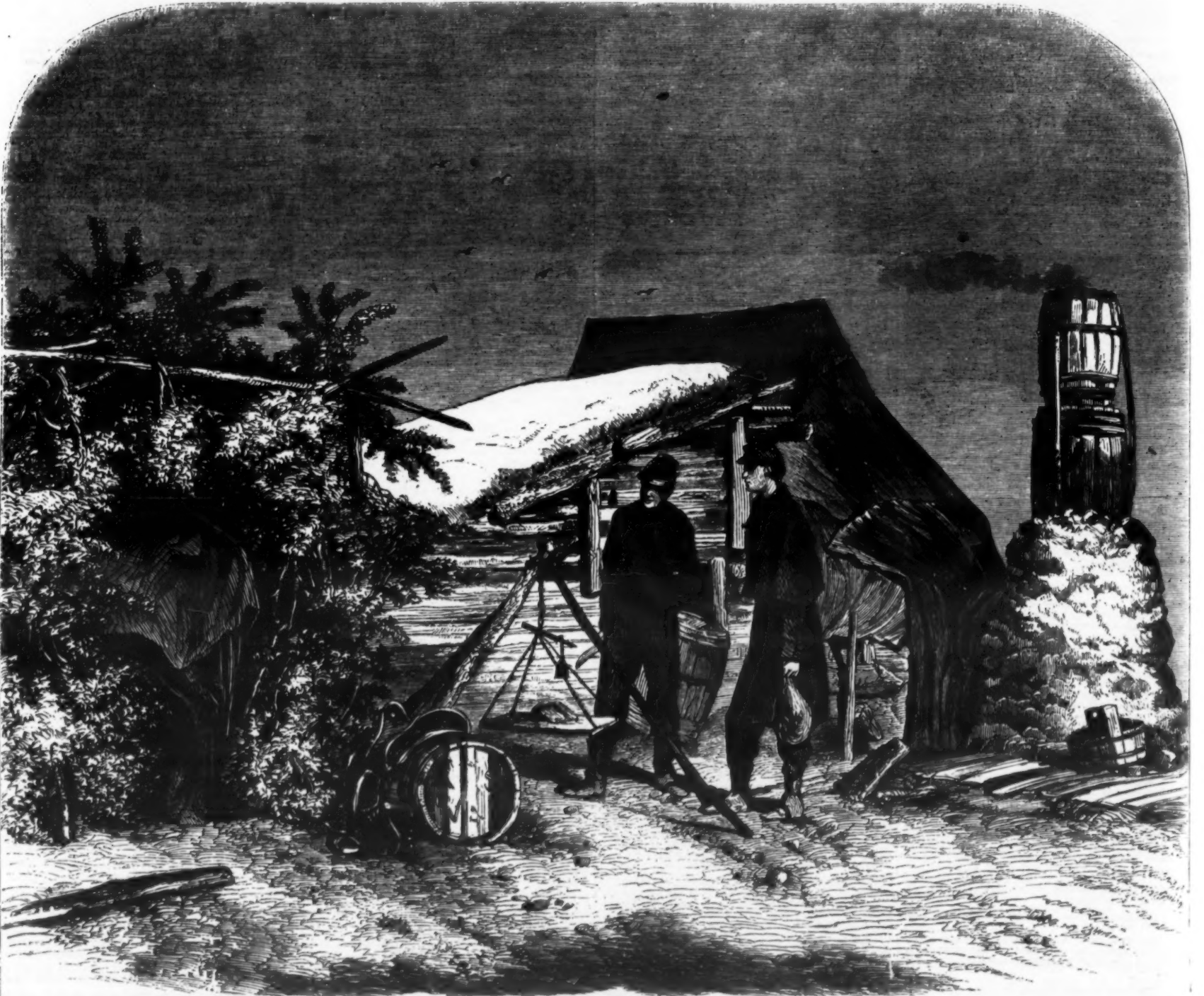
THE PLAZA DE HIDALGO, MATAMORAS, MEXICO.

MATAMORAS has always been an object of interest to Americans since the time of the Mexican war. It became a town on our frontier, giving us the daily spectacle of civil war and commotion. During the

present war it has thriven wonderfully, being the depot of a great cotton trade. While the rebels held Texas this traffic was carried on directly from Brownsville. The occupation of that town, however, compelled the rebels to cross with their cotton at Piedras Negras and Eagle pass, up the river. The cotton was then carted down to Matamoras. The recent occupation of Eagle pass will tend still more to break this up.

We give a sketch of the cathedral of Matamoras and of the square in front of it, called the Plaza de Hidalgo, in honor of the heroic priest who initiated the struggle for liberty. The signs of the stores show the mixture of Spanish and English. The sign of Ambler & Anderson and one with an inviting air, "Billiards," are relieved by one in the background, "Ropas Hechas."

Mr. Rock, the player, once advised a scene shifter to get a subscription on receiving an accident. A few days after he desired the man to show him the list of names, which he read, and returned to the poor fellow, who, with some surprise, said: "Why, Mr. Rock, won't you give me something?" "Is it me you mean?" says Rock; "why, sounds! man, didn't I give you the hint?"



SNIPPETS OF ARMY LIFE—WEIGHING OUT RATIONS.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, EDWIN FORBES.—SEE PAGE 103.



THE PLAZA DE HIDALGO, MATAMOROS.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, C. E. H. BONWILL.

THE SOUTH WIND.

BY AMANDA T. JONES.

Oh, the light south wind!
It brought us the odor of orange bowers,
Of citron trees and of all rare flowers,
As we sat by our doors in summery hours,
Did the light south wind.



Oh, the sweet south wind!
It brought us the oriole's love-breathing note,
The paroquet's praise of his pretty green coat,
The carols that rush from the mockingbird's throat,
Did the sweet south wind.

Oh, the loud south wind!
It brought the rude song and the African's jest,
It brought us—oh, shame!—his deep sighs of unrest,
When the foot of his master bore hard on his breast,
Did the loud south wind.

Oh, the wild south wind!
It brought us the murmurs of bitterness first,
Then threats of the traitor (for ever accurst),
And the hum of a tempest just ready to burst,
Did the wild south wind.

Oh, the mad south wind!
It brought us the surge of a battle maelstrom,
The cracking of rifles, the cannon's deep boom,
The crashing of mortars, the thunders of doom,
Did the mad south wind.

Oh, the sad south wind!
It told us anew the dark story of Cain,
Rehearsing, to grieve us, again and again,
The groans of the dying, the dirge for the slain,
Did the sad south wind.

Oh, the glad south wind!
It brings the sweet bugle-note, piercing and strong,
Proclaiming the triumph of Right over Wrong,
And we lift up our voices to join in the song,
Of the glad south wind.

Married Four Days without Knowing it!

MARRIED four days without knowing it! Was such a thing ever heard of? I fancy not; it wouldn't agree with the eternal fitness of things. Nevertheless, I was married in broad daylight, in full possession of my senses, and was not aware of the happy fact until four days afterwards! How did it happen? Ah, dear reader, it is just my purpose to relate that:

My father's patronymic was Dimple, and I was the only little Dimple that he and my mother could boast of. My father died four years before I attained my majority, and I fell heir to The Willows, a goodly fortune and large share of inherent bashfulness; inherent, I say, because my worthy mother often told me that my father was the most bashful young man that she ever met with. From the time of my father's death my mother lived very retired; indeed, so secluded was I from the outside world, that when manhood's years were upon me, and circumstances threw me into society, I found myself incapable of assuming the position due to me. I was possessed of talents, had an excellent education and much information, for I had been a great reader—my books had been my chief companions—yet with all my studying and reading I had neglected the great book of society, that book of so many types.

To be sure, I had some acquaintances—even a hermit knows somebody—yet these were made by no exertions on my part. I had no young lady friends; I belonged to no "set;" I knew no "jolly fellows;" and if I mention our minister and a few worthy church members, my teachers, persons with whom I had business transactions, and some ancient friends of my mother's, I will have enumerated all who were honored by having me notice them. In my usual intercourse with men I could proceed without embarrassment, but when "out," when in company—as I found I had to be after I had taken upon myself the ownership and management of our home—I was ill at ease; my conversational powers were of the poorest description; I was not affable, even at commonplace; and, knowing my failings, I strove to be as retiring and unassuming as possible. My blushing, stammering and confusion in the presence of ladies made me a butt for their sly ridicule, and my impressions of them were not flattering; I conceived them to be a flirting, affected set, who thought it womanly to measure their abilities by their conquests and apply the term "soft" to goodnatured gentlemen of modest dispositions. Alas, the string attached to my mother's apron had had very strong ties for her dear boy!

As a matter of course such game as myself was not to be neglected; my wings were well feathered, and the people knew it. In my walks, bows from obsequious individuals were plenty; professional men were "happy to meet" me; elderly gentlemen shook my hand in a fatherly manner, asking me to call and see them at their houses: "And you know, my dear Dimple, if I should not be home, why, the ladies will be only too glad to receive you." Enterprising mammas, prospecting for gold, thought me as rich a spot as they could strike on, and although their daughters were happy in ridiculing my failings, they would have been much happier had I paid court to them. Did I ever think of marrying? Oh, yes; but I had never seen a reality that would approach my ideal of a wife, and sometimes I blamed myself for looking for too much perfection. Invitations to call and invitations to parties were alike neglected, although my mother strove to persuade me to accept some of them, that I might rub off some of the rust of disuse; and I became more of a bookworm than ever, wishing for no other world than The Willows, no other society than that of the speakers of the silent language—my books.

At last, however, a circumstance transpired which materially altered the monotony of my life. A serious trespass on my property gave me occasion to consult Judge Walker, of Salem, who had been one of the executors of my father's will, and who had always been his legal adviser. On calling at his office one afternoon, I found that he was at court, presiding at a murder trial. My business was urgent, it would be imprudent to delay the matter too long, and as it was impossible to confer with the judge then, I concluded to wait and see him at his house during the evening. The Willows was a mile out of town, and the judge's residence just half-way between. Eight o'clock found me at the wicket-gate that opened into the judge's garden, and there I stopped and shuddered—the judge had a daughter! I had forgotten that. What would I do? "Oh, never mind, my boy," said I, to myself; "ask for the judge, transact your business, and depart with a clear conscience." Certainly, just the idea.

Through the wicket-gate, up the gravel-walk, under the grapevine, and I was on the stoop. This was built in piazza style, and between its shadow, the darkness of the night and the want of a light in the hall, I had trouble in finding the knocker. A hard rap at this was soon answered by a pattering of feet, and a voice singing, "Charley is my darling!" The door was hurriedly opened, and before I could speak a pair of arms were thrown about my neck, and a girlish voice said:



"That little Affair of the Trespass."

"What detained you so long, father?" And a plump, warm cheek was pressed against mine, as if the owner was waiting to receive the paternal kiss.

This was a predicament for a bashful man. I had never kissed a young lady in my life, and now to have a handsome girl's arms about my neck and a pair of lips so close to mine was rather—well, it was more than I had bargained for. I was embarrassed, yet I admit that I actually thought of giving her a loving hug and a kiss, and then beg her pardon and tell her that I mistook her for my mother. As I said, I was embarrassed; and it was not until the arms were taken from my neck, my fair embracer saying, "Why, father, what is the matter?" that I found words to explain myself.

"My dear young lady—that is, Miss Walker, your father is not me; you must—ah—or at least I must—"

At this juncture the appearance of a servant with a light put an end to my elaborate apology, and discovered me with hat in hand trying to articulate something, and Miss Walker standing a beautiful picture of confusion. She had retreated a few steps, but had neither screamed nor fainted; her curls were slightly disordered; her cheeks were covered with womanly blushes; and a startled expression was on her face, which relaxed into a smile as she recognised me, and broke the awkward silence:

"Why, Mr. Dimple! Dear me, what a mistake I have made! I was sure you were father; you must excuse me, sir."

Excuse her! certainly I would. Such mistakes I thought very excusable, especially with such a fair offender. My embarrassment over, I stated my business, and knowing, of course, that the judge was not at home, I was taking my leave, begging a world of pardons, when a very pressing invitation to stay and await the judge's coming brought me to a halt.

My distrust of woman generally half persuaded me to decline, but Miss Walker's conduct after her little, and, to me, pleasing mistake; her unaffectedness and charming nonchalance had awakened my dormant admiration—I liked the girl. I sacrificed my distrust, entered the parlor, considering myself a doomed man, and was seated in an armchair before one of those grate fires that I loved so much.



According to Law—but no Clergyman.

She busied herself a few moments putting away some sewing, and as she flitted here and there I had a chance to observe her. She was of medium height, and her figure was perfection, well set off by a close fitting dress reaching the neck, and relieved by tasty linen collar and brooch, while linen cuffs terminated the sleeves. Her face had that quiet, modest expression of true beauty; her lips full and pouting, and her chin well rounded, both showing strong love and affection; her eyes large and blue, and her well-shaped head adorned with a profusion of chestnut curls. She kept chatting all the time, endeavoring to keep me at ease; but the little *contretemps* on my arrival, and her pleasing manner, had stolen away half my diffidence.

At length the clearing-up was finished, and she seated herself in a rocking-chair beside me.

"You know, Mr. Dimple," said she, as she shook back her curls, displaying a beautifully formed neck, "father is away usually most of the day, and I am always happy to meet him on his return and receive his kiss. Since dear mother died I have loved him more than I ever did, and I always feel sorry to part with him and always glad to welcome him home—that will account for my affectionate reception of you this evening," and she smiled pleasantly.

I stammered out something about her having no occasion to excuse herself at all; then I coughed, and was near losing ground, but Tom Moore saved me. A volume of his poems was lying near, and I took it up and opened it.

The page before me bore the title of the second section of "Lalla Rookh," "Paradise and the Peri," and in pencil on the margin was written: "This poem contains the best sentiment of Lalla Rookh"—my own opinion exactly, and I mustered courage enough to express that opinion to Miss Walker.

From this remark sprang a conversation that lasted during a good part of my stay. I found that she was well read in both prose and poetry, and they had been my life study—English literature had been my particular hobby. I told her as much, and grew eloquent on my favorite theme. I reviewed the poets from old Chaucer to Tennyson, not forgetting our own children of the Lyre; I snubbed the classics and pitted Milton against them; I repeated Shakespeare's "Seven Ages," and even gestured in doing so; I gave Ben Jonson the cold shoulder; I praised Goldsmith for his truth and simplicity, and lamented poor Chatterton; I defended Byron, and challenged any poet to equal Moore for melody and sentiment. Then I glanced at the prose writers, winding up with Irving, and giving as a sample of his beautiful style his description of the Alhambra by moonlight. Here I dropped authors, but fearing that I would lose vantage if I quitted books altogether, I ran the risk of being considered a bibliomaniac, and took up biography and history; and found that Miss Walker was almost as well informed on the lives of eminent personages, and as well acquainted with historical facts, as myself. Mind you, I did not do all the talking myself; oh, no; my fair companion gave her opinions and expressed her views freely; and when we came down to commonplace (and I let myself down slowly, for I dreaded what was to me shaky ground), I found myself conversing as if I had known her for years. I was astonished at myself; I found that I had conversational powers that I had never dreamt of. And what had brought them to light? That is easy answered—I had found what I had long sought for, a person whose tastes sympathized with my own, a woman of education and liberal sentiments, who could converse on other subjects than the usual small talk of society. I need not say that she was my admiration, but it was not her intellectual acquirements alone that pleased me—her whole manner was pleasing; as she looked in my face while talking, her eyes had the open, honest look of the true woman; there was no affectedness in voice or action; and her smiles were much different from the quizzing ones I had been used to. I was charmed; I forgot the hours and my bashfulness; and the spell was not broken until a footstep sounded on the gravel walk—Miss Walker started—then a heavy foot on the stoop. "Oh, it's father, I'm sure," and she hurried to the hall, and I could hear the door open before the knocker sounded; then a kiss and tender inquiries from daughter to father as to what detained him; then a whisper about "the gentleman in the parlor"—which caused "the gentleman in the parlor" a flurry of the heart—then the door opened and the hale old judge himself entered, followed by his daughter. I arose and instantly commenced a hurried, stammering apology for intruding; but the judge stopped me as he grasped my hand warmly:

"Why, my dear boy, this needs no apology; happy to see you, sir—consider yourself at home. Where have you kept yourself? I believe I have not seen you since the settling-up of your father's will; snug property that of The Willows, sir. Sit down, sir; sit down. Sorry that I was not here sooner, but we had a long trial and a most obstinate jury. Threatened to lock them up until to-morrow, and—no, Lizzie, thank you, I have had some supper—and as I was saying, Mr. Dimple, that made them act like sensible men."

Here I managed to state the cause of my visit, but thought that he must be weary of law for one day at least, and that the affair of the trespass might lie over until some other time.

"Ah! yes, Mr. Dimple, it is rather a troublesome affair; but we can easily settle it some other time. I have to sentence the culprit to-morrow afternoon—sorry to have to do it, sir; clever, manly young fellow—did it all in a moment of passion—but the law must be satisfied, and I will be at leisure in the evening; suppose you call in the evening?"

Did I like the idea of having to call on the next evening? I think I did—I am very sure I did. On my way home that night I reflected on the change

that had come over me within a few hours. Charles Dimple, Esq., of The Willows, had become an altered Dimple. Certainly Lizzie Walker was not perfection's self, but I resolved that seeking for entire perfection would no longer be one of my imperfections. Fancy was busy. Said she to me: "Now that you have broken the ice, your bashfulness will amount to nothing; you do not know your own worth; why, your money is all powerful; and all you will have to do is to propose, and she will accept you without a demur." But my better judgment said: "If she's the girl you take her to be, she'll do nothing of the kind." "Spoken like yourself, my boy," said I; and buttoning my coat to the chin, I faced a penetrating nor'easter, and was at home in a few moments. My mother was sitting up for me.

"Why, Charles," said she, in a troubled tone, "where have you been? Did you see the judge?"

"Oh, yes, mother. Saw her as soon as I called, and it is all right. She says—"

"She says! Who?"

"Why, the judge, to be sure; he thinks it's a clear case, and I tell you she's splendid. Hold her well up, and she'll take hedge and ditch; give her fair play, and I'll back her against the field!"

"Why, Charles, are you crazy? What are you talking about?"

"Why, Miss Walker, to be sure. She is as fine a young lady as—oh! oh!"

Here I came to my senses, and related my evening's experience. I found in my mother a sympathetic listener. She thought, since she was getting well on in years, that a new mistress would be a good acquisition to The Willows. She would have broached the subject before, were it not for my backwardness, and now since I had met with such an estimable young lady as Miss Walker, she advised me to keep up the acquaintanceship. Believing that my mother spoke like a sensible woman, I then and there resolved that, if my spirits would keep me up, I would keep up the acquaintanceship. Sleep was long in paying her visit that night; my brain was too busy, and when at last I was under her influence dream followed dream; and when I arose in the morning I could have sang "Her bright smiles haunt me still." I was impatient until evening came, and when at last the curtains of night were fairly drawn I donned my sprucest attire, and with cane in hand took my way to the home of my legal adviser—of course only on business, just to settle that little affair of the trespass, you know. Through the wicket-gate, up the gravel-walk, under the grapevine, and I was again at the knocker. I confess my heart was fluttering, but wasn't I on business? Certainly I was. I was ushered into the parlor, the judge met me at the door with outstretched hand, and shook mine warmly. Lizzie received my proffered hand with a pleasant smile, and placed a chair for me between herself and father. That evening I shall ever remember as among the pleasantest of my life. I did not allow myself to become embarrassed during the whole of my stay; but perhaps I was just a little bit absent-minded, for several times I caught myself looking at Lizzie when talking earnestly to the judge; and I also remember that I forgot "that little matter of the trespass" entirely. Ah! yes; there had been a trespass committed on my property, but Lizzie had committed a greater trespass on my heart.

After this I often paid an evening visit to the judge's, and he soon saw the way matters were drifting. He would sit chatting awhile after my arrival, and then, like a good old soul, he would steal off to his library or bed, and leave Lizzie and I to ourselves.

That was a pleasant time, that courtship of mine. It lasted a year, and seemed like a long dream. Lizzie's society was a world to me, and an evening not passed in her company seemed like a blank in my existence. I loved her with all the devotion of my ardent nature, and well I knew that she returned it "measure for measure." Ours was not like the love of two beings who meet by accident, become mutually affected, and from which springs a spontaneous love at first sight. No, it was deeper, holier; it was the love of two natures well met.

When I proposed marriage I was not accepted on account of wealth; it was out of pure love, and Lizzie told me so in such a confiding, womanly way that I pressed her to my heart, and—well, I hardly remember how many times I kissed her.

Of course I was aware that the judge would offer no objection to our union, nevertheless it was necessary that I should ask his consent, and this bothered me not a little. Many an off-handed fellow would have settled such a simple affair in a trice, and took it all as a matter of business; but I—ah, well, I had some of my backwardness left. I shall never forget the humorous scene that ensued when I tried to unbosom myself to the judge. Lizzie was in the parlor on my arrival, but she well knew the nature of my errand and stole away. My legal adviser was in one of his best humors, and I immediately went to business.

"I came down this evening, judge, to—tell you that I have, or at least I would like to—to know if there could by any possibility be a flaw in the lease you had drawn up for my tenant yesterday?"

"Oh, certainly not, sir; certainly not. One of my best clerks drew it up, and I examined it myself."

"Well, there is another matter I wish to speak about—a—how do you find legal business, now, sir? But—as I was saying—you know, sir, in the course of human events it often becomes necessary for a man to—to—of course you understand me?"

"Perfectly, my dear boy, perfectly."

But that "perfectly" seemed to me as a matter of course; for in place of saying "God bless you, my boy," and asking which was the happy day, he kept silence, and I was just a little confused.

"Well, sir, you know that affair which must fall to our lot. You understand—"

"Oh, yes, perfectly. You object to a fair being held in your lot, and you desire me to—"

"No, no, sir; I was going to ask you for a—"

"You were about to remark that—a—"

"I was going to say—a—"

"Yes, Mr. Dimple—be cool, my boy—you were going to say—a—"

"Yes, I was going to remark that—"

"That you were about to—to—ah?"

"Eh? yes, that's it—or I mean—a—"

"Ah, my dear friend, that is it exactly. I have proposed to Lizzie, and we await your consent."

I got the terrible words out at last, and the judge laid back in his chair and laughed loudly; and when he recovered himself and tried to speak he relapsed into another fit, and laughed louder and longer, while I sat looking very sheepish. But the dear old fellow came to my rescue.

"Not over your backwardness yet, Charley? I thought you had acquired a good deal of assurance by this time, still I suppose you only acted as a great many do in like instances. Quite natural, perhaps, and very like human nature. You wish my consent; you have it, my boy, and always had it. Nay, it gives me pleasure to know that I am consigning Lizzie to your care, and I feel a load lifted off my heart; for my years are beginning to weigh me down, Charley, and I might be called away at any moment. Yet I will find it hard to part with her who has been the light of my home so long, but an old man must not be selfish. No, no, an old man must not be selfish—take her, and know that you are getting one who has never been spoiled by the affections of society, and who knows how to make home happy."

The day we appointed for the wedding soon drew near, and as we were sitting chatting in the judge's parlor one evening about two weeks before the day, the judge proposed that, as I might get confused during the performance of the ceremony, he would put us through the marriage form, so as to give me a slight idea as to how I should act. To this we agreed; a servant was called as witness, the various questions put and answered, certificate signed, &c., and the judge pronounced me perfect. The day following I went to New York on business, and returned in three days, bringing with me a handsome piece of white satin for Lizzie's wedding dress. I was unfolding it to her admiring gaze when the judge came in.

"This is for the dress, sir," said I.

"What dress do you refer to, Charley?"

"Why, for the wedding—when we get married, you know."

"No man shall ever marry you to my daughter, sir."

The judge was looking "awfully severe," but I thought I saw a merry twinkle in his eye.

"Are you in earnest, sir? Did you not—"

"I am in earnest. You are a married man!"

Oh, the horror of that moment! My dream of happiness so rudely broken! I was almost speechless. Lizzie begged her father to explain.

"What is the necessity of an explanation, my dear, when you know that you are a married woman!"

Then there was a mingling of masculine groans and feminine screams, and I forgot my "retired disposition," and grew indignant.

"How dare you, presume, sir," said I, "to encourage my attentions to—"

"There, Charley, my boy," interrupted the judge, his frown giving way to smiles, "pray do not get into a passion. Every word that I said was true. You are both married—to each other. I am justice of the peace, you know, and can take a minister's duties—in the matrimonial way—upon myself. Excuse a practical joke, my children."

A light broke over me.

"And that mock ceremony was—"

"It was a real ceremony. You both gave your consent to everything, and committed matrimony unwittingly."

Lizzie and I looked at each other; to be married four days and know nothing about it was—well, it was too bad; the joke was altogether too practical. But after all I considered myself a lucky dog. Had it not been for "that little affair of the trespass" I should never have found my treasure; and the judge's way of marrying us saved me, very likely, from having to wade through a sea of blunders. So I took Lizzie home, and soon after that the judge sold his property, and then he and mother and Lizzie and I all lived together at The Willows.

NATCHITOCHES.

NATCHITOCHES takes its name from an Indian tribe that once flourished on the banks of Red river, but who have long since passed away. The French, who succeeded to them, reared their little village amid the pines, on the red clay banks of old Red river, about four miles from the present raft-clogged river. It was a place of wealth, and had of late years grown to be a place of trade and activity. As the Catholic Church had selected it as the seat of a bishop to rule over the flock in western Louisiana, this gave it an impulse, too, by adorning it with a cathedral and convent, which broke the monotony so common in Southern towns, which seem to have none of the steeple-aspiring inclinations of northern villages. The population of the village and parish was, at the commencement of the war, about 15,000, less than half being freemen. The population of Natchitoches itself was about 3,000.

It was an important place for the rebels, and for it and Shreveport they will make great exertions. Natchitoches was entered by Gen. Banks on March 31st, after a brisk but short skirmish, in which he routed the enemy under Taylor.

Our Art ist, who entered with Banks's army, sends the faithful sketch which we present.

Crossing Cane River.

We give, moreover, two views by our Special Artist of the crossing of Cane river, on the 31st, by Gen. Lee's cavalry, by fording, and in part by the bridges, which the retreating enemy had not time to destroy completely; and also of the Army of the Gulf, under Gen. Franklin, crossing by bridges and pontoons on the same day. The point sketched is about 54 miles above Alexandria.

We gave last week a sketch of the action at Grumpy's hill, which followed, and will give hereafter views, taken on the spot by our Special Artist, of the terrible engagement which has made Pleasant hill a sad misnomer.

THE VIOLETS.

BY JULIE LEONARD.

Down where the river and little brook meet,
Under a tuft of bright green grass,
Hidden away from the wandering feet
Of any who chanced to pass,
Nestled a knot of violets blue,
That bathed in the sun and drank in the dew,
And saw in the river their own rare hue
Reflected as in a glass.

They bloomed in the sunlight, so warm and gay,
And smilingly welcomed each passing shower;
They laughed at the brook as it ran away
And past their little bower.
They loved the soft breath of the balmy air,
And breathed out a fragrance rich and rare,
So subtle it was—and it was not there—
In the heart of each sweet flower.

No rude hand plucked them from out their place,
Away from that cool and shady spot,
But the soft wind kissed them with soft embrace,
To show they were not forgot;
And day after day the sweet song of the bird
And the cry of the chirruping cricket were heard,
And the heart of each blossom with joy was stirred,
And blessed its quiet lot.

Which was the Guilty Cousin?

A MONSIEUR DE BOUGAINVILLE, who committed suicide at the Palais Royal, in August, 1789, in consequence of ruinous losses at play, left an only child, Julie de Bougainville, in a state but little removed from destitution. The young lady was in her seventeenth year; not at all attractive in person; and the only resource left her was to embrace the profession of a nun. Though piously enough disposed, she resigned herself with reluctance to a life for which she had no vocation; but ultimately, yielding to necessity, she entered an Ursuline convent, near Paris, the regular confessor of which establishment was Father Etienne Lafont, an aged venerable priest, who had from his youth officiated at the church of Notre Dame. Julie de Bougainville believed herself to have no relative nearer than a far-off cousin, M. Dupré, a notary in extensive practice, through whose influence she obtained admittance amongst the Ursuline sisterhood. Her father's only brother, Alexis de Bougainville, had emigrated when quite a young man, though a widower, to the Brazils, where he had remained; but full ten years having elapsed since he was last heard from, he was concluded to be dead. His first wife had a boy-child when he espoused her—Alphonse Bertin, who was now a clerk in the notary's office. His, Alphonse Bertin's, cousin, Eugene Le Gros, the only son of the first Madame Alexis Bougainville's sister, had reached the grade of lieutenant in the 24 of the line. He had served with some distinction, in America, under Lafayette. To each of these young men M. Alexis de Bougainville had frequently sent presents, though never such costly ones as those he forwarded to his niece Julie. Bertin and Le Gros were both on very friendly terms with Made-moiselle de Bougainville, whom they had accustomed themselves to address as "Ma Cousine."

The young Bertin was held in high esteem by M. Dupré; and an acquaintance which he had formed with a very pretty, very clever, very designing *modiste*, and daughter of a *modiste*, Josephine Ramon, gave the notary much uneasiness. He had often, and warmly, expostulated with the infatuated lover, but upon that point Alphonse was obstinate, inflexible, and there appeared no doubt that, sooner or later, he would consummate his folly by marriage. Eugene Le Gros was also an admirer of the fascinating *modiste*, though not to the extent of desiring to share with her and starve upon his lieutenant's pay. M. Dupré had always manifested what Alphonse Bertin deemed an unreasonable antipathy towards Le Gros. The notary knew more of the lieutenant than his cousin did.

Such was the state of things in general, when some twelve months after Julie de Bougainville entered the Ursuline convent, and, of course, many more before it would have been possible for her to take the irrevocable vow, a letter reached M. Dupré, from Brazil, which at once entirely changed the aspect of affairs. It was a communication, from a Brazilian lawyer, announcing the death, but a short time previous, of M. Alexis de Bougainville. He had died wifeless—childless. Madame Bougainville and their offspring, two girls, had been carried off by fever within a few days of each other. The suddenness of the stroke completely broke down the already failing health of the husband and father, who survived the calamity a few weeks only. He had some time before realised his property, with a view to investment in French or rather European securities, all of which, amounting to over six hundred thousand francs (\$120,000), was devised by his latest testamentary disposition to Julie de Bougainville, his niece, with the exception of twenty thousand francs (\$4,000), which were to be equally divided between Alphonse Bertin and Eugene Le Gros. Should, however, Julie de Bougainville die without issue, the bequest to her, which must be permanently invested in the French funds, would go to Alphonse Bertin—minus thirty thousand francs to be paid to Eugene Le Gros. And in case of Bertin dying childless, Le Gros would be general and unfettered legatee. The Brazilian lawyer concluded by requesting instructions as to the channel by which the legacy should be transmitted to Paris, &c.

Over this letter M. Dupré must have pondered long and anxiously; since, according to his own sworn testimony, it was not till a week after receiving it that he disclosed the important intelligence to Alphonse Bertin, and to Alphonse Bertin only. To neither Julie de Bougainville nor to Le Gros did he let fall a hint of the matter.

The notary, as already stated, felt a strong affection for Alphonse—could scarcely have loved him better had he been his own son; and he finally determined upon a scheme for breaking off the young man's connection with Josephine Ramon, and marrying him to Mademoiselle de Bougainville. A long conference with his protégé resulted in a promise on the part of Alphonse to give up the *modiste* and marry Julie de Bougainville, who was to be kept in ignorance of the bequest till some time after wedlock. At first it was settled that, as Julie de Bougainville had only taken the white veil, M. Dupré should take the necessary steps for withdrawing her from the convent, and she consenting, of which no doubt seems to have been entertained, celebrate the marriage openly. Two or three hours afterwards Alphonse Bertin, who, meanwhile, had seen Josephine, objected to such hasty proceedings. He himself required time for reflection—say a fortnight. Finding the young man had taken his resolution, the notary yielded, and advanced him a considerable sum of money; soon after receiving which, Bertin, "who was much flurried and excited," quitted the house. A few lines, traced in pencil upon a scrap of paper and left upon a table in his bedroom, apprised M. Dupré that he should not return till the fortnight's grace agreed upon had expired.

Two days after that period had elapsed Alphonse returned to the notary's late at night, on foot, and in a very strange condition; his clothes were torn and soiled, his face scratched and bloody. He was much agitated—said, in a confused, incoherent manner, that he had been assaulted and robbed by a woman and a man. He could describe neither of them; and upon being asked where, or near where, the assault and robbery had taken place, replied, after a hesitating pause:

"Near, or at least about a quarter of a league from a *cabaret* called Le Lion d'Or, where I passed the evening."

The next morning he informed the notary that he had finally decided upon marrying Mademoiselle de Bougainville, and it would be well that the affair should be put in train at once, lest he might change his mind. M. Dupré, much pleased, declared he would set off for the Ursuline Convent within an hour at latest. When the notary was about to depart the vacillating young man solicited a short delay, and being refused, for M. Dupré would be trifled with no longer, he turned pale as paper (*pâle comme du papier*), and but for a glass of brandy given him by the *conciërge* would, the *conciërge* thought, have fainted outright. I should have before stated that Alphonse Bertin was a young man of an unusually sensitive, excitable temperament.

M. Dupré's cabriolet was not long in conveying him to the Ursuline Convent. The porter at the gate, one Jules Bart, who looked like a *vieille mous-tache* that had once belonged to a regiment recruited exclusively from the ranks of the ruffians of Paris, received him with an impudent grin, and the remark, in an undertone, as M. Dupré passed on, that the mother superior would hear news of her stray lamb sooner than she expected.

Utterly confounding news greeted M. Dupré from the severe lips of the mother superior. Mademoiselle Julie de Bougainville—Sister Marie Agnes—had surreptitiously left the convent the previous evening, and had not since been heard of. A messenger was at that moment on the way to inform the notary of his ward's inexplicable, disgraceful flight.

Those words were scarcely uttered when a commissary of gendarmes was announced, and entered the apartment.

"Our search," said he, in a sad, feeling tone, "has been successful—too successful. We found the dead body of Mademoiselle de Bougainville in a wet ditch, about a mile away. She has been cruelly murdered. Upon the unfortunate's person," continued the officer, consternation and horror holding his auditors dumb—"upon the unfortunate's person I found this paper; and near the spot this newly-torn-off fragment of cloth. They may assist in tracing the assassin. Your name," added the officer, addressing M. Dupré, "is mentioned in the paper."

"My name!"

"Your name. I may not part with the note for an instant; but I will read it to you. The hand is evidently a disguised one:

"**MADMOISELLE DE BOUGAINVILLE**—You are intended to be the victim of an infamous plot, arranged and the chief parts filled up by the mother superior, the notary Dupré, and his favorite, Alphonse Bertin. The object is to secure and divide amongst them an immense fortune bequeathed to you by M. Alexis de Bougainville, your not long since deceased uncle. According to the terms of the will, you will forfeit the bequest should you ever become a professed nun—your uncle, though you may not be aware of it, having a rooted aversion to conventual institutions. The money—nearly a million—then goes to Alphonse Bertin. He has agreed to divide it equally with the mother superior (who, through some indiscretion, got scent of the secret) and the notary Dupré. It has been only by a providential chance that I have discovered it. I, you know, was a friend of your father, and I will see justice done to his daughter. Come to me this evening. You know the way to the Château d'Aix. It is long and solitary, but you will see a man in a green blouse, and wearing a glazed round hat, before you have come far. He will safely escort you. Say not one word to a living soul; I will acquaint you with cogent reasons why you must not, till you are safe with me; act openly."

"**MARIE COULANGES**—The vile assassin! the lying impostor!" exclaimed the mother superior. "Madame Coulanges died more than a month since, and the Château d'Aix is untenanted. That, however, was not likely to be known here."

"True," said the commissary; "and the handwriting, though, as I have said, disguised, is evidently that of a man. Don't you think so, M. Dupré? And this fragment of cloth has been evidently torn from a man's coat; the color is a peculiar one."

"Great God!" exclaimed the notary with a shudder. "Alphonse Bertin is the murderer!"

The commissary and his aids did not find Alphonse Bertin at the notary's. He went out, the *conciërge* said, soon after M. Dupré, and had not since returned. But they found the young man's soiled and torn coat, from which the piece of cloth found near the corpse had unquestionably been rent. This proof of Bertin's guilt seemed conclusive, irrefragable.

A few hours later he was discovered in a state of semi-intoxication, at a low *cabaret* in the Faubourg Saint Marcel, seized and presently lodged in prison.

The trial was a mere formality. The accused, who at first had declared, in reply to the interrogatories of the judges, that he had not mentioned M. Alexis de Bougainville's legacy or legacies to any one, subsequently declared that he had to Josephine Ramon, to whom he was madly attached, in the hope that she would consent to share the wealth as his mistress, which he could only obtain by espousing Mademoiselle de Bougainville. He also stoutly averred that it was in compliance with a message delivered by a person unknown to him, and said by that person to be from Mademoiselle Ramon, that he had gone to the place where he was assaulted and robbed, expecting to find her there. He also strenuously denied all knowledge of the letter found upon the murdered girl's person, or that he was the person who bribed Jules Bart, the porter at the convent, to deliver any letter or message to Mademoiselle de Bougainville. All these assertions were flatly contradicted. Josephine Ramon swore that he had never spoken to her of M. de Bougainville's legacy, though he had importuned her with improper overtures, which had led to a violent quarrel between them. As to her having sent him a message to meet her on the evening the murder was committed, that was a pure invention. Not only the experts, but M. Dupré himself, reluctantly gave his opinion that the note purporting to be signed by Marie Coulanges was in the handwriting, anxiously disguised, of the accused, and Jules Bart roundly swore that he was the man calling himself Monsieur Maillard, who gave him two louis-d'or privately to place a note in Mademoiselle de Bougainville's hand. He had once before seen the prisoner, and heard his name mentioned, and consequently knew, though the accused suspected it not, that M. Maillard was M. Bertin. Finally, the prisoner was convicted of homicide with premeditation, and sentenced to be guillotined.

Father Etienne Lafont, confessor of the Ursuline Convent, was a very anxious auditor of the trial. He had been heard to express a very decided opinion that the handwriting of the letter subscribed Marie Coulanges was not the handwriting of Alphonse Bertin, but a clumsy imitation of it. Not, however, being an expert, he was not allowed to give that opinion upon oath in open court. He had also declared (*hautement*) that he did not attach the slightest value to the evidence of either Josephine Ramon or Jules Bart—knowing both of them as he did well. After the condemnation of the prisoner, he, at his own instance, had several interviews in his character of priest, with Bertin, which strengthened his conviction of the unfortunate man's innocence. Lafont had intimate relations with several highly influential personages, and it was to his unwearied importunity that a commutation of the sentence was at length obtained—the gallies for life being substituted for death on the scaffold. Eugène Le Gros, who was reported to have been absent at Amiens at the time of the murder—reported only to have been there—eagerly supported, as did M. Dupré, M. Lafont's efforts to save his cousin's life. This did not involve any great sacrifice on his part; the civil death of Bertin sufficed to entitle the lieutenant to M. Alexis Bougainville's wealth.

The Bertin-Bougainville affair was fast dying out of public memory when it was revived by the marriage of Eugène Le Gros with Josephine Ramon. So strange a union excited much remark, and especially gave color and consistence to the vague suspicions which, since the trial, had haunted Lafont. He was bold enough, imprudent enough if you will, to endeavor to induce the public prosecutor to resit the whole of the circumstances. This, however, was refused, but the attempt, and the offensive reasoning by which it was supported, must have greatly exasperated Eugène Le Gros and his wife. Father Lafont was quite aware that he had made a mortal enemy of the *parvenu modiste* and her uxorious husband, and he several times remarked to his friends that he felt sure he was watched whenever he left the church, especially when on his way to or from the Ursuline Convent, where, strange to say, at his earnest solicitation, Jules Bart still officiated as porter. The man was dying by inches of some internal complaint which of late had rapidly developed, and Lafont was anxious not to lose sight of him, in the hope that the close approach of death might terrify him into making a revelation that would be serviceable to Alphonse Bertin. The man, however, lingered on, making no sign, much longer than had been declared possible by the medical attendant. At last the summons came, and Jules Bart was told that, internal mortification having taken place, he had but a few hours at the most to live. The terrified wretch frantically entreated the mother superior to instantly send for Father Lafont. This was done, and Jules Bart expired in a few moments after having made his confession. Lafont, who appeared to be strangely agitated when leaving the death-chamber, spoke a few hurried words to the mother superior, the purport of which was, that the departed sinner had made important disclosures—not under the seal of confession, which, in fulfillment of the moribund's own request, he should communicate without delay to the criminal authorities. Bart had also warned him that he was constantly watched, and that as soon as the employers of those who dogged his steps knew,

which they soon would, that he had been with him (Bart) in his last moments, the priest's life would be in imminent danger. Father Lafont said he believed that to be true, and he would therefore hasten at once back to Paris, so as to reach it before evening had quite closed in. The good father then left, walking at his fastest pace. I may here add, it was discovered that Jules Bart, or whatever his real name might be, was an escaped felon—the letters T. F. being branded on his shoulder. The fact was known by the surgeon before Lafont was sent for, and Bart, perceiving his secret was discovered, muttered a malediction upon Eugène somebody—the surname was not caught by the hearer—who knew that too, and long ago.

Father Lafont never returned to the cathedral of Notre Dame. Rigorous inquiries were instituted, but without any result: no trace of him could be found. The Revolution was fast lashing itself into frenzy of rage, especially against priests, and it was thought probable that he had been massacred in the streets, as on the same evening two other persons were. The objection to that surmise was that the body could not be found.

Another year rolled away; the population of Paris was drunk with blood, and amidst those who, from some cause or no cause at all, were strung up à la lanterne, was M. Eugène Le Gros. His wife was seized at the same moment, and would have shared his fate, but that she was recognised by an influential ruffian, and declared by him to be, instead of a bloated aristocrat, a hard-working *modiste*, one of themselves. She was released, and reached home in safety, but never recovered the shock sustained by her nervous system—never afterwards left the house. She survived the fall of Robespierre a few months, but for long previous to death her mind was completely shattered by horrible fantasies, to which in her sleeping and waking dreams she often gave shrieking utterance. Those demented ravings were attributed by the physician that attended her, and who knew nothing of her antecedents, solely to the effect of extreme nervous terror; her talk—demons, murders, and similar pleasant topics—to a notion possessing her at such times that she was still struggling with the sanguinary ruffians from whom she had once so narrowly escaped.

Shortly before her death, and when it was evident to Dr. Petit that the end was very close at hand, that gentleman bethought him that the ministrations of a priest, tacitly permitted by the rulers who had succeeded Robespierre might help to calm her troubled spirit. "I accordingly," states Dr. Petit, "asked my friend the Abbé Delmar, who, as it chanced, had once lodged at Madame Ramon's for a short time. He perfectly remembered the handsome, sprightly Josephine, but, having been several years absent from Paris, had never heard of her marriage. He was consequently much surprised to find that the mistress of the mansion to which I conducted him was Madame Ramon's daughter.

"Madame Le Gros was dying," said Dr. Petit, "when I and the abbé entered the apartment, where she lay reclined upon a luxurious couch. The abbé was not in clerical costume, in order that she might be informed I had taken the liberty to bring a priest to speak with her gently, tenderly. It was not long before she opened her eyes, awaking in much calmer mood than usual. Her glance first rested upon me, and a faint, sad smile flickered across her pale, wasted features. Presently she noticed the abbé, and a slight scream escaped her; and half rising from the couch, she gazed with intense earnestness in his face, whilst muttering to herself, 'I know—I remember—the Abbé Delmar—the good Abbé Delmar. That was in the happy time—long—long for ever passed. Hark!' she suddenly exclaimed, breaking off abruptly, 'Hark! he is coming upstairs. You hear his stealthy step. Save me, save me! You are a priest also. Drive him away!' she added, falling back, shaking in every limb with terror, burying her face in one of the pillows. This fancy of some one ascending the stairs to drag her away was a frequent one, and when I happened to be present I always humored her by going outside the door, and peremptorily forbidding the intruder's approach. I did so upon the present occasion. 'Merci! Merci!' gasped the wretched woman. 'He is going back. But he will come again when you are gone. Ah!' she continued, speaking with wild eagerness, 'you, the good abbé are a priest, and could sprinkle the dark, damp grave with holy water, so that he could never come out of it again. Go, go, at once! Not you—only the priest; you stay with me. Go—the cellar, that farthest off. Ah, the door is strongly barred; yet he can pass through; and why not you? Go, go, go!'

"The abbé at a sign from me left the room, as if to comply with her behest. She sat listening intently for a while; but before he returned dosed off again, and, summoning her attendant, we left. That night she died.

"The strange fancy which so constantly haunted her that some one was coming upstairs, always out of the cellar, to drag her away, struck me as so very odd that I at once asked the servant if there was a strongly-secured barred-up cellar. She said there was. I mentioned the reply to the abbé, and he, who had quickly ferreted out all about the De Bougainville tragedy, spoke of it to a commissary of police, that functionary to the officer of gendarmes who discovered the corpse of the murdered Julie, and who of course knew all about the mysterious disappearance of Father Lafont, with whose opinion of M. and Mme. Le Gros he was moreover well acquainted. The zealous officer broke his way into the cellar, found it empty, and set his men to work digging up the floor. A grave was found in which a human being, an aged man, had been buried. Quicklime had been thrown upon the corpse, which was probably interred in a naked state, and only a few bones were left!

"The next of kin to Eugène and Madame Le

Gros divided amongst themselves the large sum which had been invested in the names of the wife as well as the husband, and threatened with the penalties of the law any and every one who should dare question the perfect innocence of their deceased relatives. As to Alphonse Bertin, to convince the Directory or the Consuls that the conviction in his case was wrong proved to be impossible. Probably neither of those exalted personages ever took the trouble of giving the memorials upon the subject forwarded to their nightingales a conscientious, careful perusal. However that may have been, one thing is sure; Alphonse Bertin escaped from the Bagne, and ultimately from France, during the last year of the Consulate, and, I suppose, sought refuge and peace in the New World."

GOLD IN NEW YORK.

THE rise and fall of gold during the war has been a problem, and to enable some future investigator to study the reasons and causes, an enterprising man has got up a chart like a meteorological table, showing its variations. A table closely ruled with straight lines, and one single line—evidently not under the influence of sobriety—making a queer zig-zag across, is not a very attractive picture. We chronicle the gold fever in our way, by giving illustrations of scenes on the street this week. Never had speculation run riot as it has lately done.

Gold had been forced up, up, up. But there came a crash. The precious metal which had reached the perilous height of 180, came down to 171, and on its fall dragged down stocks, real and fancy, spreading dismay in Wall street and filling it with lame ducks. House after house suspended. The speculation wavered, all was eagerness and excitement. Our artist sketched the scene of confusion on Exchange place, the bidding, the offers of men in the street, on wagons, from windows; the financial storm on the surface not ruffling yet the ocean depths of the Brokers' Board, hermetically sealed from the prying eyes of the outside world.

How completely the spirit of speculation has invaded all classes, may be seen in the fact that ladies have been the wildest speculators. A *coterie* actually met daily in one of our hotels, to discuss the stock market and make their purchases through some young brokers who attended regularly for the purpose. The ardor with which the fair wives and daughters of wealthy merchants embarked in the perilous trade was characteristic, and more than one case of absolute ruin is known.

In the meanwhile a new fever arose among merchants. To secure the gold certificates issued by Government, crowds pressed to the Treasury building. The impatient seekers formed a long queue which extended for blocks. Men staid it might to secure an early place. Others sought to buy; some who had secured places for the purpose sold out, making a fair day's work.

Our sketches show not only the building and these scenes, but the consequences. The miser, the gold gambler in luck, the ruined man, the closed banks, with the divine's reproving glance at all the vanity.

WEIGHING ARMY RATIONS.

ARMY rations! In all the reports of armies, campaigns, marches and sieges, do our readers often reflect on the hard fare to which, for three years and more, over a million of men have been reduced?—the hard biscuit, the salt meat, weighed out with scrupulous fidelity, as though too precious to be wasted. See the picture, true to life and carefully studied, which we give to-day from our artist with the Army of the Potomac, whose merit the country will hereafter appreciate. There is nothing very delicate or recherché in the *foie gras*, nothing very alluring or exciting. Yet it is life, and as such will well repay the study and breed reflection.

THE U. S. 10 40 LOAN.—Instructions to the National Banks acting as loan agents were not issued from the Treasury at Washington until March 20th. The bank did not generally begin to receive subscriptions until one week later, and in distant parts of the country have yet hardly begun to work, but the subscription lists reported by mail to the Treasury up to April 22d, amount to over \$31,000,000, and the sum actually subscribed but not yet reported at that date is much greater. The attempts of interested parties to compel the Secretary of the Treasury to raise the rate of interest on this loan have a galling effect. The experience of the last few weeks gives us every reason to believe that all the money the Treasury desires to borrow, can be obtained for five per cent. interest in gold.

BROOKS'S PATENT WRITING, WORK AND TOILET CASE COMBINED.—This is what has long been wanted, and Brooks has managed to put more into a small compass than any one of the time. It is light, compact and elegant, and contains all that is necessary for a soldier and traveller, as well as being very useful in a household. For all who live in country villages it is invaluable.

ONCE upon a time there dwelt in the village of L— a fellow who was known as old Pete. He was noted for knowing everything that happened before any one else.

One day being in the village tavern—a favorite resort with him, for he could always find some one there to listen to his big yarns—a gentleman there spoke of a hydraulic ram that he saw in the city.

"What in thunder is that?" asked an old man who was present.

Now was the time for old Pete; so, drawing himself up, and assuming an air of importance, he said:

"Why, didn't you ever see one of them high draw-lift rams? Why, down South, where I was several years ago, they don't raise any other kind; and I've seen 'em so big that they'd shear forty pounds of wool!"

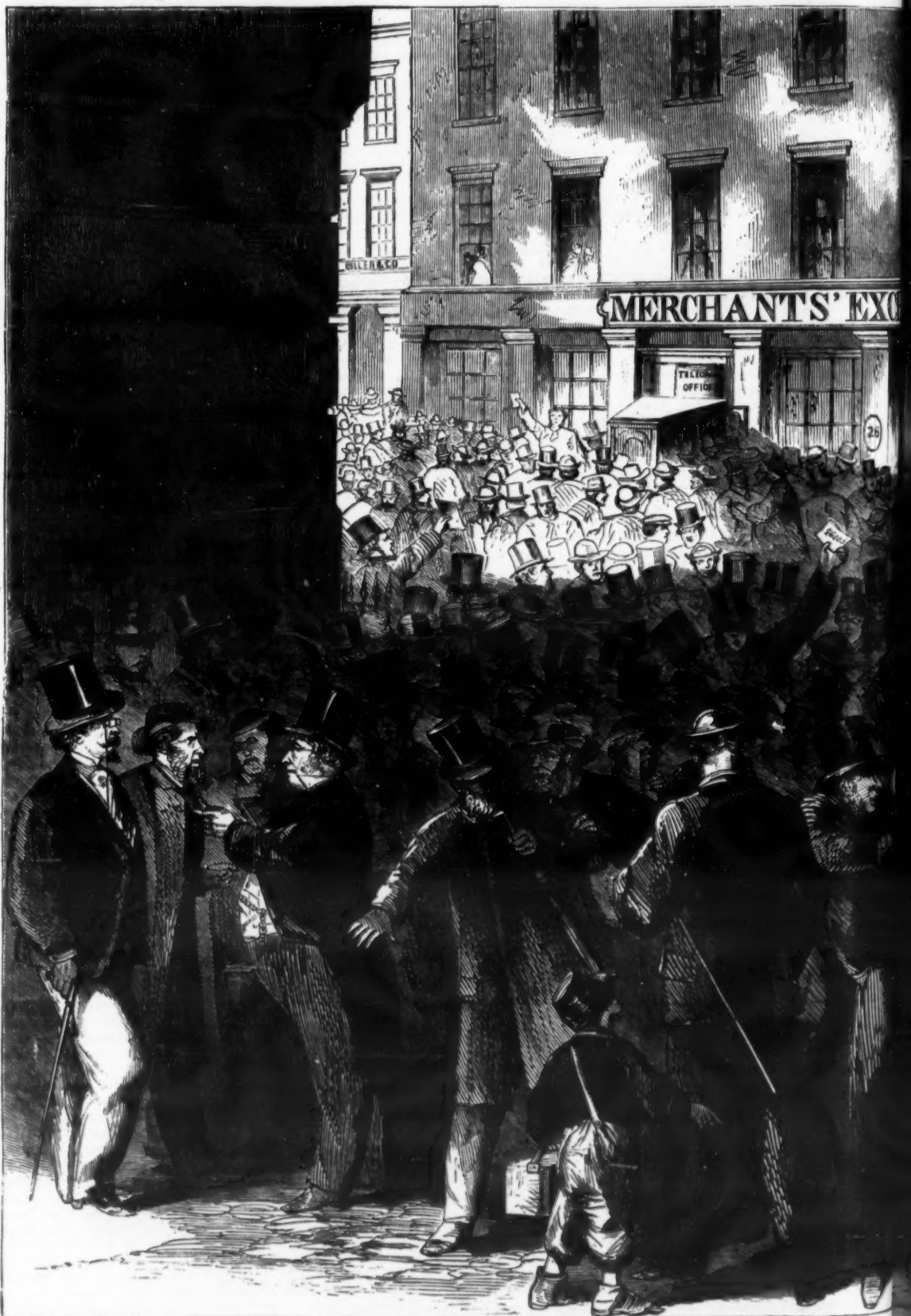
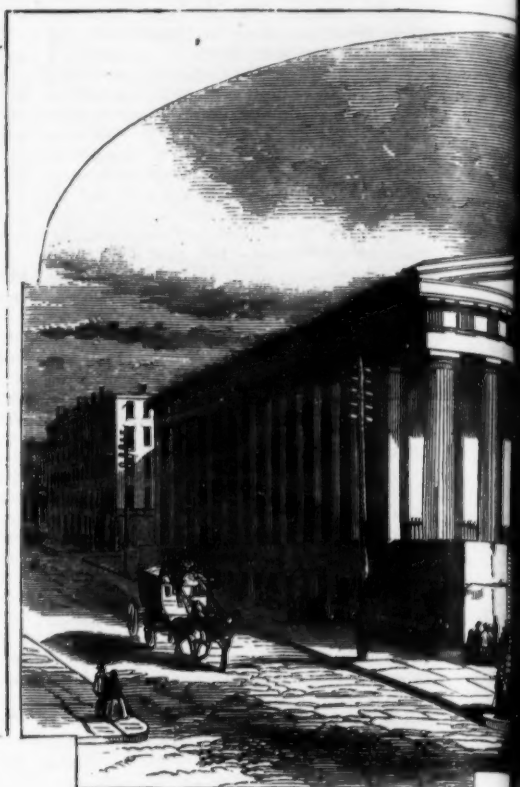
AN Irishman, who had borrowed some money of Lawyer L—, of our village, came one day to his office to pay it. After it was paid he wanted the lawyer to give him a receipt for it.

"What do you want with a receipt?" said L—, who wished to have some fun with Pat, as the office was filled with loungers.

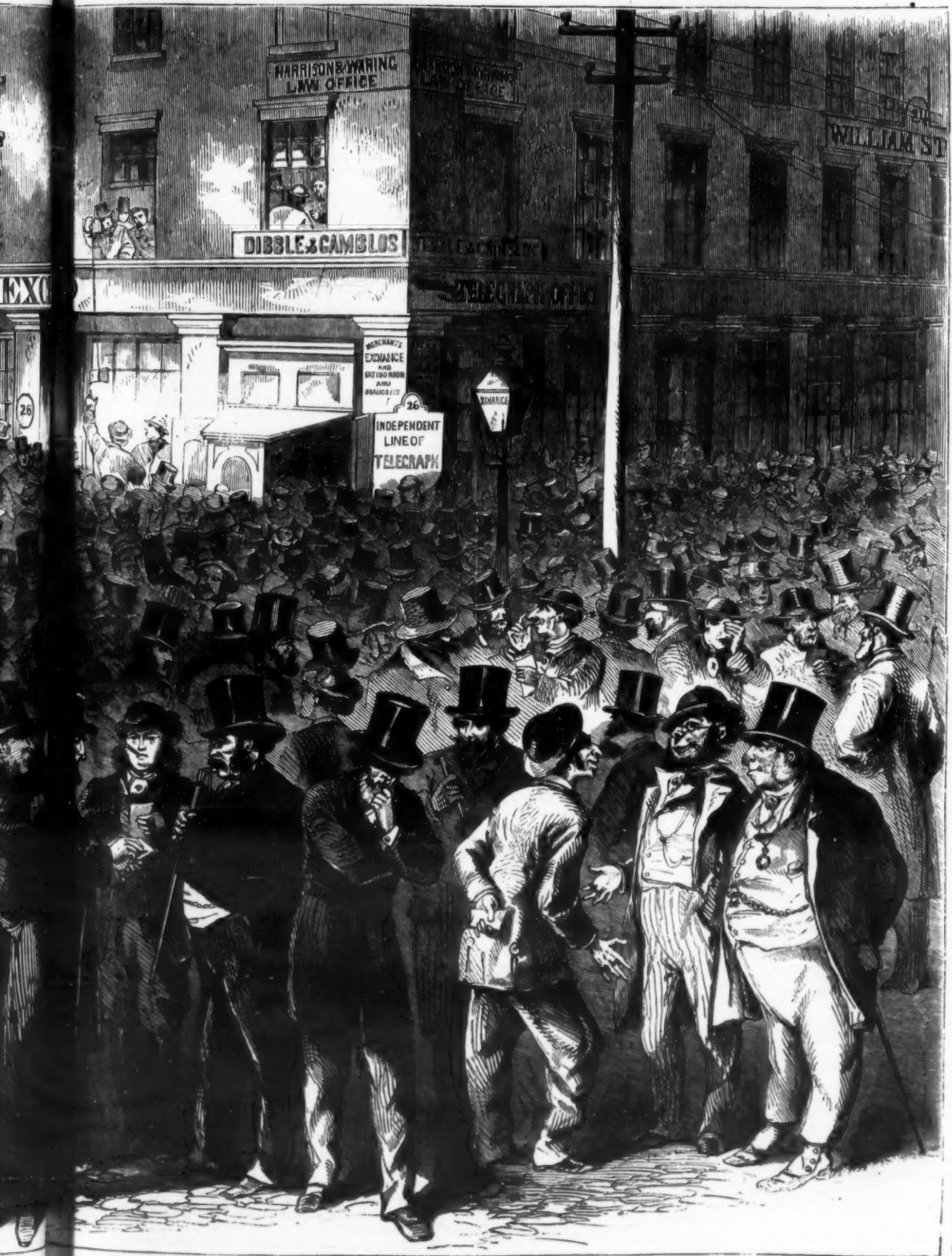
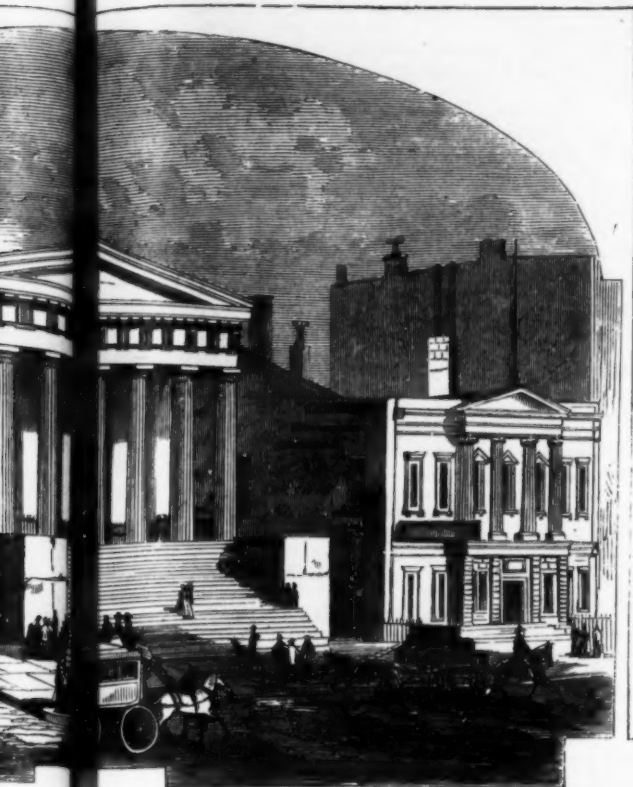
"Why," said Pat, "ye see that when I die, an' go up to Hivn and knock at the gate, and one of the howly angels comes and opens the gate, and srs, 'Who's there?' I'll say, 'Pat Murphy, please yer riverence.' Then he'll want to know if I'm an honest man, I'll tell him to be sure I am. Then he'll want to know if I've paid old Lawyer L—, and I'll tell him I have. Then he'll want to see the receipt; and if I don't have it with me I'll have to go back an' pick it all over hell to find it."

The "receipt" was given as soon as the laughter subsided.

"A FROG," says Professor Bump, "is an amphibious animal, what hears on cold water, and consequently invented the teetotal society. He always walks with a jump, he does; and when he sits down he stands up. Being a lover of native melodies, he gives free concerts every night, he does, himself. He periwinks music for the million, which has been so called because it usually is heard in a millpond. He is a warmist what ain't so bad when broiled on a gridiron."



1. Lady Speculators in Session. 2. Sold to a Profit. 3. Selling a Place in the Line for Gold. THE GOLD FEVER IN NEW YORK—THE EXCITEMENT AMONG THE SPECULATORS



"OUT OF THE DEPTHS."

BY GRACE DE LA VERITE.

Measuring time by agony!
Quivering, pl-reed humanity!
None to soothe me when I weep,
Nor one hour of vigil keep;
No, not one!

Measuring time by agony!
Chilling looks are cast on me;
None to touch my aching brow,
Loving words to whisper low;
No, not one!

Measuring time by agony!
Agony for harmony!
None to chide me when I grieve,
Nor the light with dark to weave;
No, not one!

Measuring time by agony!
Why unfold my misery?
None but strangers pass this way,
None who care with me to stay;
No, not one!

Measuring time by agony!
Look, O Jesus! where I lie!
Day is turned to night for me;
Sun, nor moon, nor star I see;
No, not one!

The Gulf Between Them.

By Mrs. Ann S. Stephens.

CHAPTER XXX.—CONTINUED.

THE pair of sable retainers went on with their conversation, totally unconscious of the listener they had had, and when the interest connected with that subject had culminated diverging to themes more intimately connected with their own affairs.

One of the chief desires of 'Dolph's soul was to find out exactly how much money Clorinda had in the bank but he had never been able, with all his arts, to bring her to that point of confidence when she would make him a partner in that dearest secret of her life.

The other servant's and her friends in the neighborhood gave very contradictory accounts concerning the amount, and Victoria openly avowed her belief that—

"De whole ting was just gammon—didn't 'blieve she had no money nohow—she know'd she was so old that it was her only chance of ketchin' a bean, so she tried it on."

But 'Dolph was too wise to be influenced by Victoria's sneers, and he had lately become convinced that the sum was a larger one than he had at first supposed. In that case 'Dolph felt the extreme folly of allowing his fancy to stand in the way of his interest. Already he had incurred Clorinda's serious displeasure by his behavior on different occasions; it had required a vast amount of eloquence to reconcile matters after his indiscretion with the strange young woman at old Mother Hopkins's, and his flirtations with Victoria were a constant bone of contention between them.

'Dolph felt certain that if he only came directly to the point and made Clorinda a bona-fide offer of his hand with his heart in it, she would melt like honey candy in the sun, but it required a good deal of resolution to make up his mind to that step.

Clorinda was not prepossessing in her appearance, that her most partial friends would have been forced to admit; probably even in her youth she might have passed for as ugly a young darkey as could easily have been found, and now that years and avarice and a not very patient temper had worn their furrows in her face, it really required all the glitter of her reported wealth to make her endurable in 'Dolph's mercenary eyes.

Then her color and her frizzled locks at which Victoria sneered so openly—that was a tender point with 'Dolph—he had the true contempt for the jetty hue which one is certain to find among those of his bronze complexion.

'Dolph stood there looking at Clorinda and revolving all those things in his mind, while she washed away at her vegetables and made herself busy as possible at the kitchen dressers.

"Dis life is full of mysteriousness, Miss Clorindy," he said in a meditative tone.

Clorinda snipped off the tops from the carrots she was preparing for her soup and assented.

"Dar ain't much wuth livin' for," she said gloomily.

"Dolph was frightened at once; when Clo got into one of her desponding humors she became very religious without delay; unless he could get her off that tack he would most certainly be condemned to Methodist hymns and a prayer-meeting that very night.

"Don't say dat, fair Miss Clorindy, now don't!" he exclaimed, pathetically. "You'd de light ob too many eyes for sich renunciations—de luminary dat lights der hearts as de sun does de sky at noon-day."

Clorinda simpered; with all her firmness and numerous other grim virtues, she was a thorough woman at heart, and never could withstand flattery thus adroitly administered.

"Go 'long with your poety nonsense," said she, giving a coquettish toss to her head that made the little frizzed knobs below her gorgeous bandanna flutter about as if suddenly electrified. "Go 'way wid sich, I say."

"Don't call it nonsense, sweet Miss Clorindy," urged 'Dolph, in a more insinuating tone; "when a gemman disposes the tenderest feelings of his busson at your feet, don't jist at 'em."

To be called by such endearing epithets in two consecutive sentences softened Clorinda greatly; this time something uncommon must be coming—'Dolph certainly was in earnest.

"I don't see nothin' at my feet," said she, with a little giggle.

"Yes, yer does, Miss Clorindy," pleaded 'Dolph; "yes, yer does—now don't deny it."

"La!" said Clorinda, with another giggle full of delightful flurry, "you men is so confusin'."

"I don't mean to be confusin', Miss Clorindy," said 'Dolph; "it's far from my wishes—leastways wid you."

There was a tender emphasis on the concluding pronoun which quite upset Clorinda. She allowed the carrots to fall back in the pan of water, and seated herself on a stool near by—if anything serious was coming she would receive it with the dignity she considered befitting the occasion.

Artful 'Dolph, profound in his knowledge of the sex, read her thoughts without the slightest difficulty, and his vanity chuckled inwardly to see how impossible it was for any female heart to resist his fascinations. Still he was in a condition of great perplexity; he had no intention of committing himself until he had learned the exact price Clorinda could pay for the sacrifice he was prepared to make of his youth and good-looks. On the other hand, he was sorely puzzled how to acquire the information he desired without laying his heart at her feet; he had tried various plans and they had all signally failed; in that respect Clorinda was astute enough to be fully his match.

But he must say something; in a moment more Clorinda might flounce off in one of her tempers, and 'Dolph could not afford to lose time in misunderstandings, particularly as he had lately discovered that the sable parson whose meetings she attended was becoming quite devoted in his attentions.

"Ah! Miss Clorindy," said he, "de sect is all resemblous in one leetle partidar."

"What do yer mean?" inquired Clo, in a languishing way, which she thought becoming in response to the tenderness of his voice.

"In yer cruelty," said 'Dolph, "yer cruelty, Miss Clorindy."

"Laws, nobody ebber said I was cruel," returned the matter-of-fact Clo. "I wings de necks o' de chickens and skins de eels alive, 'cause it's a cook's lookout, but I hain't got a speck of cruelty in me."

'Dolph shook his head, then dropped it on one side with an air which he had found very killing in former flirtations, and replied:

"In course ye'll deny it—it's de way ob de sect, but de fact is dar."

"I don't know what yer mean," said Clorinda, beginning to resume a little of her usual rigidity; "if yer ain't a talkin' Spanish now, it's jist as bad."

"I alludes to de coquetations in which you all indulge."

"I don't," said Clo; "I leaves all sich foolishnesses to silly things like dat Vic—I hain't no patience wid 'em."

"Oh! Miss Clorindy, Miss Clorindy!"

"Dat's my name, fast 'nuff; yer needn't go shouting it out dat ways."

"When I see seed wid my own eyes," said 'Dolph.

"What has yer seen? Jis 'ticularise—I hate beatin' round de bush."

Clo began to simmer again; she really believed that 'Dolph was getting jealous; the bare idea filled her with a delicious thrill—triumphs of that sort were sufficiently rare in her experience to be exceedingly precious.

"But I don't know what yer mean," she went on, "no more'n de man in de moon."

"Dar it is!" said 'Dolph. "Why, I b'lieves dat ar's de only reason de sect looks at de moon, 'cause dar's a man in it."

"Oh, he's too far off," returned Clo, with a prolonged chuckle at her own wit; "too far off by a long shot."

"Bery good," said 'Dolph. "Bery good indeed! Yer's in fine spirits to-day, Miss Clorindy."

Here he sighed dolefully.

"Wal," said Clo, "if I be, 'tain't no reason for you to be gwining like a steam engine."

"Oh, yes it is," replied 'Dolph.

He certainly was in earnest this time—Clo felt assured of that. She forgot the half-washed vegetables, the unseasoned soup, and still tried to look more bewitching in his eyes.

"I don't see why," she said, in sweet confusion.

"But any how yer didn't prove nothin' 'bout my bein' coquettious."

"Dar it is!" cried 'Dolph. "It all goes to-geder."

"Oh, laws," cried Clo, lightly, "as ef dat ar would set you a sighin'; I knows a heap better'n dat, Mister 'Dolph."

"Yer don't do me justice, Clorindy," said 'Dolph, seriously, putting on an injured look; "yer neber has done me justice."

"Why, what have I done now?" demanded Clo, beginning to play with her apron string.

"Yer knows," said 'Dolph, prolonging the situation as much as possible, in the hope that some bright thought would strike him by which the conversation might be led round to the subject uppermost in his worldly mind; "yer knows very well."

"Why, yer's making me out quite a monster," said Clo.

"No, Miss Clorindy, no; don't say dem keerness tings—don't! I ain't a makin' you nothin', only de most charmin' and de most cruel of yer sect."

If Clo did not blush it was only because nature had deprived her of the dangerous privilege, but she fell into a state of sweet confusion that was truly beautiful to behold.

"Dar ye go agin," said she; "now quit a callin' me cruel, or else say why?"

"Didn't I see you a Sunday evenin'?" said 'Dolph.

"In course ye did; we was to Mrs. Hopkins's arter de meetin'."

"And wa'n't Elder Spott dar, too?"

"In course he was; yer knows it well enough."

"I knows it too well," said 'Dolph, in a tragic voice.

"Law sakes, what has he done to you, Mr. 'Dolph?"

"Dar's whar de coquetations comes in," continued 'Dolph; "dat's jis de subjee I'm 'proachin' yer wid."

"Me!" cried Clo, in delightful innocence.

"Laws, I didn't know yer even looked at me; I tought ye was fascinated wid dat Vic."

"I see neber too busy to reserve you, Miss Clorindy," said 'Dolph; "wherever I may be, whatever my occupation, I see eyes fur you."

"Oh, laws!" sighed Clo. "Oh, lawsy me!"

"And I seed you," pursued 'Dolph; "I seed de elder a bending over ye, a whisperin' in yer ear."

"Oh, git out!" cried Clo. "He didn't do no sich."

"Oh, yes, he did, Miss Clorindy; dese eyes seen it."

"Wal, he was a axin' me if I was gwine to come to meetin' more reglar dan I had ob late."

"It took him a great while to ax," said 'Dolph, in the same gloomy tone.

Clo laughed a little chuckling laugh.

"He's a bery pleasant man, de elder," said she; "bery pleasant."

"Dey say he wants a wife," observed 'Dolph.

"Do dey! Mebbey he do; I ain't in his secrets."

"But yer will be, Clorindy, yer will be."

"Me! Tain't no ways likely; don't 'spect I shall."

"Oh, yes, yer will," insisted 'Dolph.

He was serious, and Clo began to grow dissy at the thought of so many conquests crowding upon her.

"I jis b'lieve he's a sarprint in disguise," said 'Dolph, with great energy; "one ob de wust kind of old he ones."

"Laws, Mr. 'Dolph, don't say sich things; he's quite a shinin' light in de sanctuary, I see certain."

"It's a light I'd like to quinech," cried 'Dolph, "and if he pokes himself into my moonshine I'll do it."

Clo gave a shrill squeal, and caught his arm, as if she feared that he was going to rush forth in search of the elder, and put his menace into instant execution.

"Don't kick up a muss wid him," she pleaded; "why should yer?"

"It 'pends on yer, Miss Clorindy."

"Laws, how?"

"Yer know; de 'couragement yer've ben a givin' him is 'nuff to drive yer admirers out o' der senses."

"Oh, dear me, I neber heerd sich nonsense!" said Clo.

"It's true," answered 'Dolph, "an' yer knows it. But yer've received in dat man, Miss Clorindy, yer is! He's got both eyes fixed on de glitterin' dross. I've heerd him talk 'bout de fortin yer had, an' how it wud set a pusson up, an' what good he might do wid it 'mong de heathen."

Clo gave another scream, but this time it was a cry of indignation and wrath.

"Spend my money 'mong de heathen!" she cried. "I'd like to see him do it! comes 'bout me I'll pull his old wool fur him, I will."

'Dolph smiled at the success of his falsehood, and made ready to clinch the nail after driving it in.

"Dat's what he tinks anyhow. 'Why, Miss Clorindy, he was a tryin' to find out jist how much yer was wuth."

"Taint nobody's business but my own," cried Clo, angrily, "folks needn't be a pumpin' me; 'tain't no use."

"Jis whet I've allers said," remarked 'Dolph, with great earnestness; "sich secrets, says I, is Miss Clorindy's own."

"Yes, dey be," said Clo, holding on to the sides of her stool as tightly as if it had been the box which contained her treasures.

"I've said sometimes," continued 'Dolph, "dat if de day shud ebber come when dat parathion ob her sex made up her mind to gib her lubly hand to some true busson dat lobed her, she'd probably whisper musical in his ear de secret she has kept from all de wuld."

Clo was divided between the tenderness awakened by his words and the vigilance with which she always guarded the outposts leading to her cherished secret.

"Ain't dat sense, Miss Clorindy?" he demanded.

"I hain't said it warn't," she replied.

"Dis wuld is full of mercenary men," 'Dolph went on, "searchin' for de filty lure; I see glad I neber was one ob dem. I allers has 'spised de dross; gib me lobe, I says, and peace wid de fair one ob my choice, and I asks no more."

Clo played with her apron string again, and looked modestly down; he was going to speak now.

But 'Dolph did not know exactly what to say next without committing himself more deeply than he desired; indeed, he had been led on now considerably farther than he could wish, but that was unavoidable.

"Not but what fortins is desirous," he said, "cause in dis world people must lib."

Clo assented gently to that self-evident proposition.

"Do yer know what I see often tought, Miss Clorindy?" said 'Dolph, seizing on a new tack.

"Spect I don't," said Clo.

"I see wished many a time, more lately 'n I used to, dat I could take some fair cretur I lobed to my heart, an' dat 'tween us we had money 'nuff to start a restauration or sometin' of dat sort."

Clo sniffed a little.

"In dem places de wuk all comes on de woman," said she.

'Dolph was quite aware of that fact; it was the one thing which made him contemplate the idea with favor.

"Oh, not at all," he said, "de cookin' a trifle; tink ob de 'counts; my head's good at figures."

"Dey kind o' puzzles me," Clo confided to him softly.

"Taint 'spected in de ladies," said 'Dolph; "dey neber ort to trouble 'emselves 'bout sich matters."

Then 'Dolph sighed.

"Yer wonders what's de matter," he said; "I was jis lamentin' dat I hadn't ben able to save as much as I could wish, so dat I could realise my dream."

"Laws," cried Clo, so agitated and confused that she was about to speak the words he so longed to hear; "how much wud it take? Does yer tink dat if a woman had—"

"I say yer Clo, where be yer?"

The interruption was a cruel one to both the darkeys, though from different reasons; the voice was Victoria's, and proceeded from the kitchen.

"Clo!" she called again, in considerable wrath, "jis' you answer now, else I'll tell missus of yer tricks."

Clo sprang up and flew at her vegetables with great energy, and 'Dolph mounted a couple of steps and appeared to be diligently searching for something in a closet.

Victoria opened the door, looked out and tossed her head angrily when she saw the pair.

"I 'spose I might a split my throat callin', and yer wouldn't a answered," she cried.

"I see 'bout my business," said Clo, grimly "jis' mind yours."

"Oh, laws! I 'spose Mr. 'Dolph's 'bout his business, too," retorted Vic.

'Dolph turned round from the closet and asked sweetly,

"Did yer speak to me, Miss Victory?"

"No, I didn't," said she; "but marster was askin' for ye, and he'll raise hot if yer stays here a gossipin'!"

"Who's a gossipin'?" cried Clo; "if he wants sometin' in de cuppard, mustn't he look to find it?"

"Don't be snappin' my head off as if yer was an old turtle," cried Vic, belligerently, "'cause I won't stan' it! Marster's got a gemman here, an' he wants lunch."

"Wal, it's your place to get de lunch," said Clo.

"Taint," cried Vic; "it's Mr. 'Dolph's."

"I see comin', ladies," he exclaimed; "I see at yer service."

He winked at Clo, out of one eye, smiled at Vic out of the other corner of his mouth, and did his best to keep both goodnatured.

"I want to know whar dem cold ducks is," said Vic.

"Look whar dey be and ye'll find 'em," replied Clo, splashing her carrots about in the pan.

"Ef they hain't gone down dat ol' preacher's throat it's lucky," cried Vic; "but ye'll ketch it if they have."

"Don't 'cuse me of none o' yer own tricks," retorted Clo.

"Jis find 'em, den," said Vic, "or I'll go up to missus."

You may go to old scratch, for all I care," said Clo, too much enraged to think of having been cheated out of an offer to be careful of language or consequences.

"Dat's pooty talk for a meetin'-goer," cried Vic. "I'll see what de elder tinks of sich."

Clo turned furiously upon her, but a violent ringing of the library bell checked the quarrel in the bud. They all knew that Mr. Mellen was growing impatient, and did not venture on another moment's delay.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE day was wearing slowly away; a day more terrible in its moral darkness and suspense than perhaps had ever before descended upon the old house.

Mr. Mellen was engaged with a succession of visitors on business, with whom he remained shut up in the library; Elsie took refuge at first in her own chamber, but either nervousness or a desire to talk drove her again to Elizabeth's room. Their dressing-rooms were separated by Elizabeth's chamber, so Elsie flung the door open and ran into her sister's room, exclaiming:

"You must let me stay; I can't be alone."

Elizabeth only replied by a gesture; she was walking slowly up and down the floor as she had been during all the morning; it was entirely out of her power to accept one instant of physical rest. She left the door open and extended her promenade through the second chamber into Elsie's, and then back, pacing to and fro till she looked absolutely exhausted, but never once pausing for repose.

They were undisturbed, except when one of the servants knocked at the door for orders, and at each request for admittance Elsie would give a nervous little cry.

"Tell them not to come any more," said she.

"They must have their orders," Elizabeth replied; "some what may, everything must go on as usual to the last moment."

Elsie shivered down among her cushions and was silent. She had pulled the sofa close to the hearth, gathered a pile of novels about her and sat there trying her best to be comfortable in her feeble way.

"If you would only sit down," she exclaimed, at length.

"I cannot," replied Elizabeth; and resumed her dreary walk.

Then there came more interruptions, and Victoria wished to know if they would have luncheon.

"Marster's got it in de library wid dem men—'spect missus don't want to go down."

"What is she talking about?" groaned Elsie, from her sofa.

"Luncheon," said Elizabeth; "will you have it up here?"

"As if one could eat—"

A warning gesture from Elizabeth checked her.

"You may bring the luncheon up here," Elizabeth said to the girl.

Victoria went out and closed the door.

"I believe they would come if we were dying to know if we would stop to eat," cried Elsie.

"Everything must go on as usual," was Elizabeth's answer.

"How can you stand there and talk so calmly to them!" cried Elsie. "It's enough to drive one frantic."

"It is too late now to be anything but quiet," she said.

Elsie began some shuddering complaints, but Elizabeth did not wait to hear them; she had resumed her promenade, walking with the same sort of eager haste, with her eyes seeming to look afar off and unable to fix themselves upon any object in the rooms.

"There is another knock," cried Elsie. "Oh, they'll drive me mad!"

"Come in," Elizabeth said.

It was Victoria with the luncheon tray, and it seemed as if she never would be done arranging it to her satisfaction.

"I bring you some apricot jelly, Miss Elsie," she said; "I knowed you had one of yer headaches."

But Elsie only moaned—perhaps at the misfortune of possessing no appetite when apricot jelly was at hand.

"Dar's only cold chicken and dat meat pie," said Vic; "I took de ducks in fur marster."

"There is quite enough," said Elizabeth; "you needn't wait."

"Yes, miss," returned Vic. "I hain't had no time yet to sweep de room Miss Harrison had—Clo's, she's ugly as Cain, to day."

"It makes no difference," said Elizabeth, while Elsie threw down her book in feverish impatience.

"Yes, miss, but 'tain't pleasant," returned Vic, with her most elegant curtsy. "I likes to do my work reg'lar and in time, missus knows dat, but when Clo gets into one o' her tantrums she sets eberyting topsy-turvy."

"Then keep out of the kitchen," cried Elsie; "don't be quarrelling."

"Laws, Miss Elsie," said Victoria, with all the injured resignation of suffering innocence; "I neber quarrel wid nobody, but I defy an angel to git along wid Clo! She's jest de most aggravatin' piece dat eber wore shoe leather! She's so mad 'cause she's gettin' ole dat she hates a young girl wuss nor pison, so she does."

Vic was now fairly started on the subject of her wrongs, and hurried on before Elsie could stop her with all the energy of a belated steam engine. Elizabeth had walked into the other room, and Victoria, standing much less in awe of Elsie than her, took that opportunity to pour out her sorrows with the utmost freedom.

"Miss Elsie, sometimes I tinks I can't stand it I wouldn't, nohow, if twarn't fur my affection fur you—you and miss," Victoria hastened to add diplomatically, fearful that her mistress might be within hearing and that the omission would be turned to her disadvantage. "Clo, she gits aggravatin' ebery day, and sence 'Dolph come back she's wurs'n a bear wid a sore head."

"Oh, you make mine ache," cried Elsie.

"Laws, miss, I wouldn't for de world."

"Then go along, and let me sleep, if I can."

"Sartin, miss; but let me do somethin' for yer head," said Victoria, out of the goodness of her heart.

"No, no; I only want to be let alone."

"If yer'd let me bathe it wid cologne," persisted Vic.

"I don't want it bathed," fretted Elsie.

"Laws, miss, it does a heap o' good! Penny-royal tea's good—"

"Oh, do go away!" groaned Elsie.

"In course I will, miss; but I'd like to do something fur ye—yer looks real sick."

"Then just go away, and don't come up again for the next two hours."

"Yes, miss, I'll jest—"

"Go out!" shrieked Elsie.

"I've only fixin' yer cushions," said Vic. "Dear me, Miss Elsie, yer allers says I'm real handy when yer has dem headaches."

"Oh, I can't bear anybody to-day."

"Dear me, ain't it a pity! Now, miss, I knows what 'ud be good for yer—"

"Elizabeth," groaned Elsie, "do come and send this dreadful creature away!"

This time Victoria deemed it most prudent to make a hasty retreat, for she stood in a good deal of awe where her mistress was concerned. She went out, reiterating her desire to be useful, and really very full of sympathy, for she was kindhearted as possible, except where her enemy, Clorinda, was in the question.

"They'll kill me, I know they will!" moaned Elsie.

But as Elizabeth did not pay the slightest attention to her complaints, she relapsed into silence. Finally, her eye was caught by the luncheon-tray; the apricot jelly looked like a great oval-shaped wedge of amber, the cold chicken was arranged in the daintiest of slices, and there was custard-cake, Elsie's special favorite.

She made an effort to fancy herself disgusted at the bare sight of food, and turned away her head, but it was only to encounter the fragrant odor from the tepid, which Victoria had set upon the hearth.

"Could you eat anything, Elizabeth?" she said, dejectedly.

"No, no; I am not hungry."

"But you never touched a morsel of breakfast, and you ate nothing all yesterday."

"I can't eat now—indeed I can't," was Elizabeth's reply.

"Oh, no! I!" moaned Elsie. "I feel as if a single mouthful would choke me."

She glanced again towards the tray, and began to moan and weep.

"Oh, dear me! This day never will be over!"

Oh, I wish I were dead, I do truly! Do say something, Bessie; don't act so."

But Elizabeth only kept up her incessant march, and Elsie was forced to quiet herself.

She rose from the sofa at last, stood by the window a few moments, but some magnetism drew her near the luncheon-tray again. She took up a spoon and tasted the apricot jelly.

"I want things to look as if we had eaten something," she said, as Elizabeth entered again.

"You had better try and eat," said her sister.

"One ought, I suppose," observed Elsie. "I think I will try and drink a cup of tea—won't you have some?"

Elizabeth shook her head, and with renewed sighs Elsie poured herself out a dish of tea and sat down at the table.

"Oh, this wretched day! I'd rather be dead and buried! Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

In an absurd way she thrust her spoon into the apricot jelly again and stopped her moans for a second with the translucent compound.

"I wish I could eat; but I can't!"

She put a fragment of chicken on her plate, made a strong effort and actually succeeded in eating it, while Elizabeth was walking through the other rooms.

"I've tried to eat," she said, when her sister appeared in the doorway again, "but I can't."

She drank her tea greedily.

"I am so thirsty; I believe I've got a fever."

But Elizabeth was gone again, and Elsie sat staring at the paté—a magnificent affair, she knew it was—one of Maillard's best, full of truffles and all sorts of delicious things. She felt something in her throat, which might have been hunger or it might have been weakness; she chose to think it the latter.

"I feel so weak," she said, when Elizabeth returned on her round; "such a sinking here," and she put her hand in the region where her heart might be supposed to lie.

"You had better lie down," her sister said, absently.

That was not the advice Elsie wanted or expected, and she cried out, spasmodically:

"How can I keep still! Oh, I wish I had some drops or something to take!"

She moaned so loudly that it disturbed Elizabeth.

"Drink your tea," she said, "and eat something; you cannot go without food."

"Well, I'll try," said Elsie, resignedly. "I wish you'd come and sit down and have a cup; maybe I could eat then."

"Not now," replied Elizabeth.

The very sight of food was loathsome to her. She had hardly touched a morsel for two days.

After a good deal more hesitation and moaning Elsie attacked the paté, and the jelly, and the pickles, and the custard-cake, and some crisp little wafers, and, finally, made an excellent meal; all the while declaring that she could not eat, that every mouthful choked her, that she believed she was dying. To all these complaints Elizabeth paid as little attention as she did to the meal she was making.

Elsie went back to her sofa, feeling somewhat comforted, and prepared to take a brighter view of things. It appeared possible now for her to live an hour or two longer—a little while before she had declared that her death might be expected any moment.

"Do come and sit down, Bessie," she said, as Elizabeth entered, for about the hundredth time.

"I'll give you the sofa; you must be tired out."

"No; I am not tired—I like to walk."

"But I am sure you have been for three hours march—march—march! Do sit down."

Elizabeth only turned away in silence, but Elsie felt so much relieved after her creature comforts, that she could not forbear attempting to inspire her sister with a little of the hope which had begun to spring up in her own narrow little heart.

"Oh, Bessie," she cried, "I feel as if this would get over somehow, I do indeed."

"But how?" she asked.

"Oh, I can't tell; but there'll be some way, there always is; nothing ever does happen, you know."

Elizabeth did not reply. She was thinking of the books she had read, in which women's ruin and disgrace were depicted; of the accounts in almost every day's paper of families broken up, their holiest secrets made a public jest; of terrible discoveries which had been made, shaking a whole community with the commotion, and dragging all concerned before the eyes of the whole world. Yet Elsie could say:

"Nothing ever does happen!"

She was thinking that perhaps in a few hours that quiet house might be agitated by a discovery, mysterious and full of shame as any of the occurrences in the novels she was recalling; only a few hours and she might be driven forth to a fate terrible as that of the unhappy women whose names she had shuddered even to hear mentioned.

Not for one instant did she delude herself with hope. She knew that the crisis was at hand now, the fearful crisis which she had seen approaching for weeks. This time there would be no loophole of escape—this last respite was all that would be granted her; and even now that she had gained that much, there seemed every hour less probability of her being able to turn it to advantage.

Then the task before her, the thing she had to do, a work at which the stoutest man's heart might have quailed, alone in the dead of night, with the fear of discovery constantly upon her, and the horror of an awful task frowning her mind.

She clutched at her dress frantically as the scene presented itself, in all its danger, to her excited fancy. She saw the night still and dark, herself stealing like a criminal from the house; she saw the old cypress rising up weird and solemn, she heard the low shiver of its branches as they swayed to and fro; she saw the earth laid bare, saw—

The picture became too terrible, she could endure

no more, and with a shuddering cry she sank upon her knees in the centre of the room:

"God help me! God help me!"

Elsie sprang off the couch and ran towards her with a succession of strangled shrieks.

"What is the matter? What ails you? Oh, oh! You frighten me so. Are you sick—did you see something? Is he going that way?"

But the woman neither saw nor heard, her eyes were fixed upon vacancy, an appalling look on her haggard face, which might well have startled stronger nerves than those of the girl by her side.

"Elizabeth! Elizabeth!" shrieked Elsie, in a genuine terror which there was no mistaking.

"I must do it," muttered the woman; "I must do it! Alone—I must go alone! And all no use—no use—I tell you, no use!"

"Oh, Bessie, dear Bessie! Get up! Don't look so! Oh, for heaven's sake! Bessie, Bessie!"

Elsie threw herself upon the floor beside her sister, crying and shrieking, clinging to her, and hiding her face in her dress, as if fearful that some terrible object would start up before her gaze. Her agitation and wild terror recalled Elizabeth to her senses. She disengaged herself from Elsie's arms and staggered to her feet.

"It's over now," she said, feebly, with the weariness of a person exhausted by some violent exertion; "I am better—better now."

"Oh, you frightened me so."

"I won't again. Don't cry; I am strong now."

"What was the matter? Did you see anything?"

"No, no. I was only thinking; it all came up so real before me—so horrible."

"But it may be made all safe yet," urged Elsie. "If you can escape this time—only this once."

She did not connect herself with the trouble which might befall her sister. Even in that moment of anguish her craft and her selfishness made her remember to keep present in Elizabeth's mind the promise she had made.

"Only this once," she repeated.

"It is too late," returned Elizabeth. "I told you the day would come—it is here!"

"But he can't discover anything, Bessie, when everybody is ased."

"Have you thought what I must do?" she broke in. "The horror is almost worse to bear than exposure and ruin would be."

Elsie wrung her hands.

"Don't give way now. You have borne up so long; don't give way when a little courage may save everything."

"I shall not give way; I shall go through with it. But, Elsie, it will all be useless; the end has come."

"No, it hasn't! I'm sure it hasn't! Think how many secrets are kept for ever. It needs so little now to make us secure; only don't give way, Bessie—don't give way."

"Be quiet, child; I shall not fall!"

Elizabeth walked away and left her crouched upon the floor, went to the glass and looked at herself. The rouge Elsie had rubbed on her cheeks burned there like two hectic spots, making the deadly pallor of her face still more ghastly; her eyes were sunken and gleamed out so full of agony and fear that she turned away with a shudder. Her hair had fallen loose, and streamed wildly about her shoulders. She bound it up again, arranged her dress and recommenced her restless walk.

"Get up, Elsie," she said; "some one may come in."

Elsie took refuge on her sofa, and sobbed herself into a sound slumber, while Elizabeth, in her haggard anxiety, moved up and down, horrified by terrible reflections, which wrung her soul and left it dumb, with a passive submission, born rather of desperation than endurance.

At last she caught sight of Elsie lying asleep upon the sofa. She approached and bent over her. The girl had brushed her long fair curls back from her face, and they fell over the cushions in rich luxuriance, a feverish color was on her cheeks, lighting up her loveliness, and her whole appearance was so pretty, so singularly childlike, as she lay there, that it seemed impossible, even then, that she could have anything in common with the awful trouble that oppressed Elizabeth.

Elizabeth stood for a long time regarding her, and many changes passed over her face as she did so, but they all settled into a look of settled determination, and she turned away. Whatever was to be borne she would endure alone; she would keep her promise to the very letter. If ruin and disgrace came they should fall on her alone. Why attempt to involve that fair young creature in it?

She went to a cabinet in the corner of the room, opened a little drawer and took out a package of letters. They were those her husband had written to her during his long absence.

She drew an easy-chair near to the sofa and sat down, with her face turned towards Elsie, opened one or two of the epistles and read passages from them. One of the pages she read ran thus:

"Whatever may happen, no matter how long my absence may be protracted, I know that you will take care of Elsie. If the worst should happen—if death should surprise me in this far-off land, I know that you will fulfil for me the vow I made my dying mother and be a parent to that desolate girl."

"Forgive me if I pain you by writing so sadly. I do not believe that any misfortune will happen to me; something tells me that I shall reach home in safety, and find love and happiness once more awaiting me there."

"But the charge I have in Elsie's future is always present to my mind. I never can forget the words that my dying mother spoke; they are with me night and day, and have been since the hour when they were whispered from her pallid lips."

"It rejoices my heart to think how different from most girls our little Elsie is. If any harm were to come to her I think I should go mad; disgrace to one whose blood was kindred to that in my veins would kill me. You may think this pride a—"

ness, but it is too deeply rooted in my nature ever to be eradicated. When I look about the world and see girls disgracing themselves by improper marriages, elopements, often worse shames, which must blight their lives and those of all connected with them, I think what I should do under such circumstances."

"Elizabeth, I could not endure it. You are my wife; I love you more deeply than you are aware; but I tell you that I could better bear sorrow which came to me through my wife than through the weakness or dishonor of one who claimed my name by right of birth. It is an inherited pride, which has, I know, come down from father to son, and will go with me through life."

"But Elsie is safe—in your hands quite safe. I rest upon that thought. I remember her loveliness, her innocence, her sweet childish ways, and I am at peace again."

That was the letter Granley Mellen had written during his long exile, and there his wife sat reading it in the presence of that sleeping girl.

After a time Elizabeth folded up the letters, kissed them passionately, and laid them away.

"Perhaps it is the last time," she murmured. "The last time! I won't think—I won't think! Let the day pass!"

She began walking up and down the rooms again, treading softly that she might not disturb Elsie's slumber, and trying to build up a hope in her desolation, only the next moment to be swept aside by the black waves of her agony and her fear.

"He will not feel it so very much when it is only me on whom disgrace falls," she thought, with mournful satisfaction. "For her at least I shall have done my best. I have struggled so hard to keep the fair creature he loves so much from harm. When I am swept from his path, like a black cloud that had no silver lining for him, he will be happy with her. I ought to be comforted by this. Yet, oh, my God! my God! this thought alone makes the worst of my misery. They will be so happy, and without me!"

BOOK NOTICES.

LIFE OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN. Philadelphia: J. B. Peterson & Brothers.

GEN. McCLELLAN'S LIFE AND REPORTS. Philadelphia: J. B. Peterson & Brothers.

This enterprising house gives, in a popular and cheap form, the "Life of President Lincoln," embracing his Speeches, Proclamations, Letters, Messages, &c., and forming a large volume of 300 pages, extremely useful for reference, and at a remarkably low price.

A "Life of Gen. McClellan," with a full history of his campaigns and all his reports, in the same style, is also offered, and cannot fail to meet an extended sale, although it has many competitors.

THE SCHOOLGIRL'S GARLAND. Parts I. and II. By M. C. M. KIRKLAND. New York: Scribner & Co.

Simultaneously with the death of Mrs. Kirkland appears the second part of her "Schoolgirl's Garland." The circumstances would disarm criticism, were there a field for it, but there is none. It would seem to be easy to make a good selection of poetry for the young; but in reality there are few competent to make a really good one. True poets have failed in this apparently simple task.

Mrs. Kirkland took up the subject as one accustomed to watch the unfolding minds of young girls, and her selections are graduated, beginning with the simple lyrics that you can read to the little miss of four years old, seated upon your knee, and find her attentive listener, and rising to the noblest poems in the language. The pieces chosen are gems, and treated as such. The two little volumes, in type, presswork and paper, are of unexceptionable simple beauty. The volumes have no association in the girl's mind with tasks and schoolbooks. They cannot but be favorites and exercises of a most beneficial influence.

THE CHAPLAINS AND CLERGY OF THE REVOLUTION. By J. T. HEADLEY, Author of "Washington and his Generals," "Napoleon and his Marshals," &c., &c. New York: Scribner, 1864, 12mo., 402pp.

Mr. Headley, who ranks among our most popular and graphic writers, has here brought together biographical sketches of the lives and labors of the most eminent chaplains and clergy of the Revolution: Jonas Clark, of Lexington, Dabné Dr. Spring, Prime, Tennent, Muhlenberg, Allen, Roseburg, Benedict, Bishop White, Timbby, Dwight, Degret, Styles, Barlow, Caldwell, Trumbull, Kirkland, Gano, Cummings, McCalla, Dr. Witherspoon, Avery, Evans, Smith, Champion, McWhorter, Allen, Pomerooy, Rogers, Duffield and others. We miss, however, Archbishop Carroll, whose services in his mission to Canada entitle him to a place in the list of patriotic clergymen.

The sketches are carefully prepared, not so much for the historical student as for the public, and it is needless to say are full of interest and eloquence.

As Mr. Headley remarks, the influence of the clergy in the great movements in America has been immense, and yet in written histories is almost ignored. The French and Indian wars were supported by the eloquent appeals of the pulpit; the patriot sermons of the clergy roused our fathers to action in the Revolution, and the influence exerted by that body prior to the present civil war is notorious.

MY CAVE LIFE IN VICKSBURG. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1864pp., 12mo., 1864.

We have not met a more interesting book on the war than this narrative of a lady caught in Vicksburg, and there during the siege. Our readers cannot forget the caves in the side of the hill, made by the inhabitants to escape from shells. The writer was the inmate of one, and describes the life of the people in their subterranean abodes, their hardships, their miseries, their fortitude, amid constant terrors, and death in every shape.

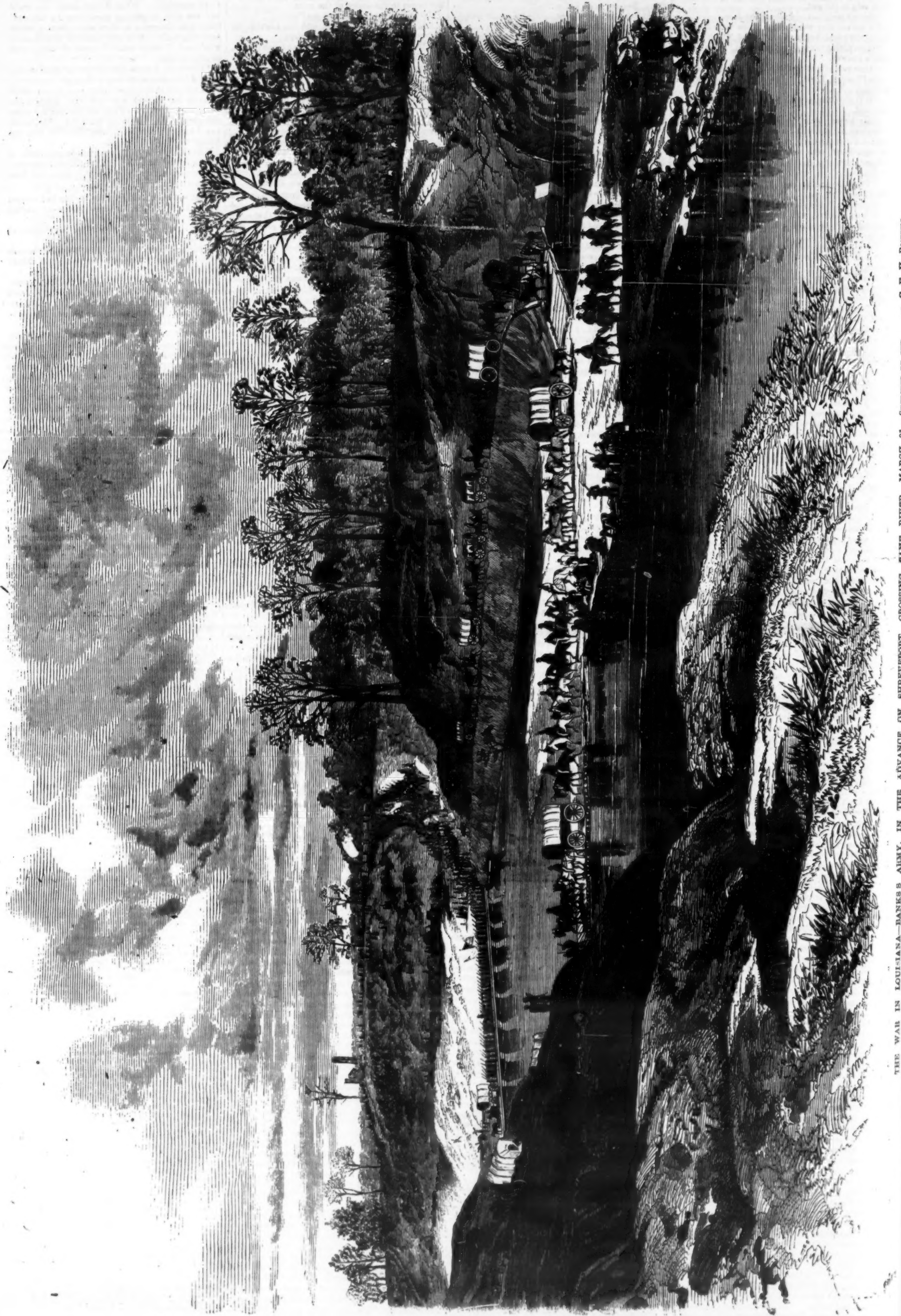
It is the work of a lady, and we purpose giving extracts, to enable our readers to enjoy it.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY for May, 1864. Boston: Ticknor and Fields.

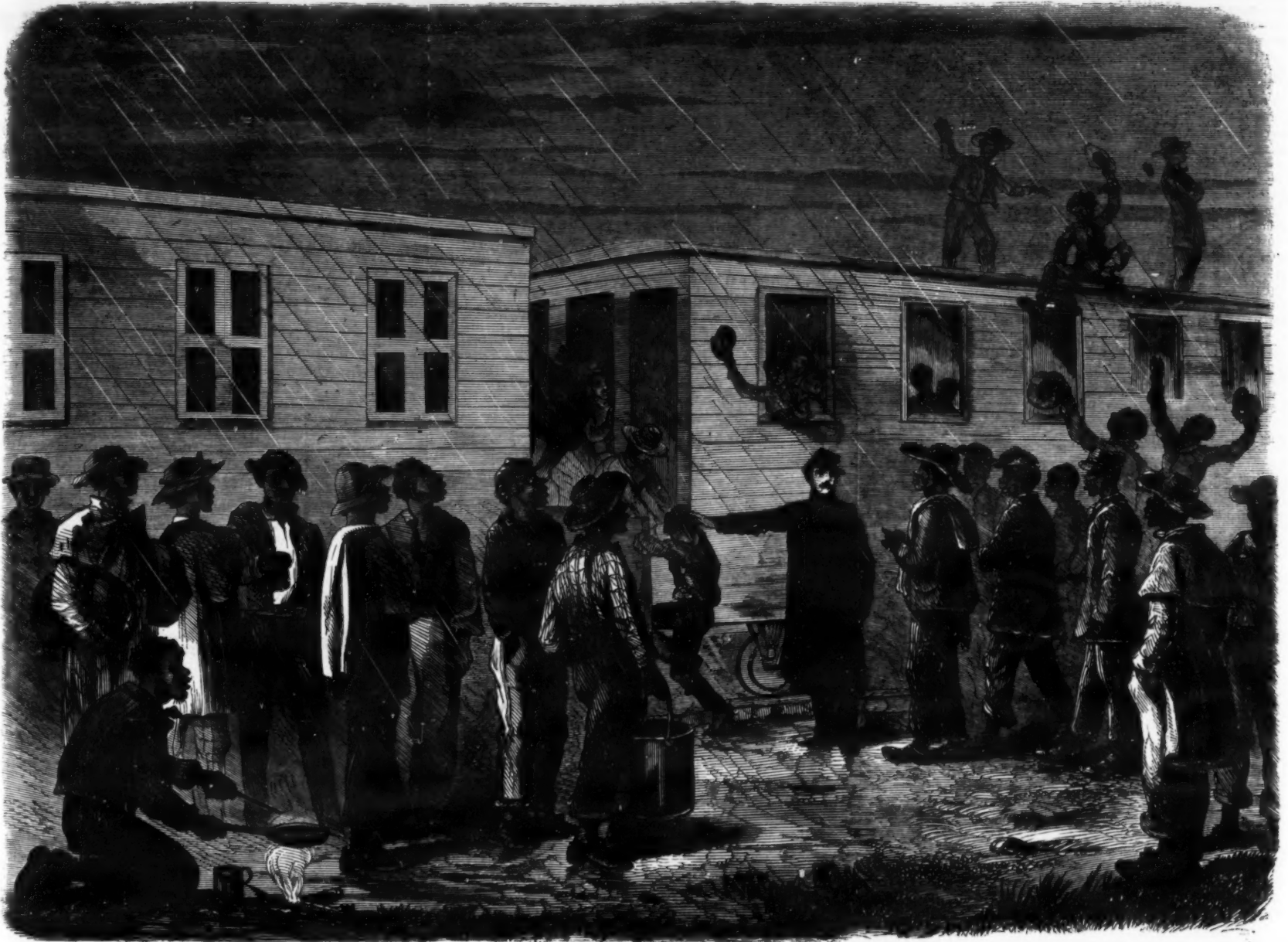
We may well be proud of a magazine like the Atlantic, which, differ as we may with regard to the political views of some of the articles, is the embodiment of much of the finest, purest and best cultivated talent in the country. The present number contains: Gold Hair, a Legend of Rome, by Robert Browning; A Cruise on Lake Ladoga, by Bayard Taylor; a continuation of House and Home Papers, by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe; Wet Weather Work, by I. K. Marvel; the Reaper's Dream, by T. B. Read; the Elm, by Harriet E. Prescott, &c.

PHILLIPS'S STERLING EXCHANGE, for the Reduction of Sterling into United States Currency, and Currency into Sterling, at Rates varying from 1 per cent. from 50 to 100 per cent. By ALFRED PHILLIPS. New York, 1864.

These valuable, because accurate and well printed, tables we can recommend to our readers, who must in these days of unprecedented exchange cast aside the old books as no longer available.



THE WAR IN LOUISIANA—BANKS'S ARMY, IN THE ADVANCE ON SHREVEPORT, CROSSING CANE RIVER, MARCH 31.—SELECTED BY OUR ARTIST, C. E. H. BOWWILL.



THE WAR ON THE MISSISSIPPI—NEGRO RECRUITS TAKING THE CARS FOR MURFREESBORO.—FROM A SKETCH BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST, C. E. HOLLIN.

NEGRO RECRUITS.

The sketch of negro recruits taking the cars to Murfreesboro' comes in sad contrast with the scenes at Fort Pillow. The negroes enter the service of the Government, under an implied promise of protection. But in spite of their voluntary enlistment, in spite of their heroism at Milliken's bend and Fort Wagner, they are butchered in cold blood, and scarcely a word of indignation or sympathy is expressed, and Government is as inert to retaliate as though it were of no importance.

BRIG.-GEN. J. G. TOTTEN, U. S. A.

BRIG.-GEN. JOSEPH GILBERT TOTTEN was at the head of the corps of Engineers, the most thorough branch of the service, to which only the most accomplished graduates of the military are assigned. He was a veteran and a man of high attainments. He was born in Connecticut, in 1788, and entered the Military Academy on the 4th November, 1802, receiving his first commission, that of 2d Lieutenant of Engineers, on the 1st July, 1805, nearly 60 years ago. He became 1st Lieutenant in 1810, Paymaster and Captain in 1812, was Chief Engineer in the campaign on the Niagara in 1813, won a brevet of Major for his gallantry at Fort George, and of Lieutenant-Colonel for his conduct at the battle of Plattsburg, in 1814, for he was here, too, Chief Engineer. He received a Major's commission in 1818, a Lieutenant-Colonel's in 1824. Ten years after he was made Colonel and Principal Engineer. During the Mexican war his services were called into requisition; he was Scott's Chief Engineer at Vera Cruz, where he won the brevet of Brigadier-General, and in the third war of the century stood at the head of his important department, having been commissioned a Brigadier-General, March 30, 1863. He died at Washington on Saturday, the 23d of April, 1864.

The War Department has ordered appropriate honors to be paid to his memory. During the 26 years that he was at the head of the Engineer Department he administered with untiring devotion, spotless integrity and signal ability the varied duties, the financial responsibilities and professional labors of that arm of the service. Our extended line of coast and lake defenses are enduring monuments to his memory.

THE CAVES AT VICKSBURG.

Our readers will recollect the caves in which the inhabitants of Vicksburg took refuge during the siege, which we so graphically illustrated.

A Southern lady has just published a work entitled "My Cave Life at Vicksburg" (Appleton, New York), which gives a thrilling account of them and life in them. Speaking of the running of the batteries, she says:

"Some of the gentlemen urged the ladies to go down into the cave at the back of the house, and insisted on my going, if alone. While I hesitated, fearing to remain, yet wishing still to witness the termination of the engagement, a shell exploded near the side of the house. Fear instantly decided me, and I ran, guided by one of the ladies, who pointed down the steep slope of the hill, and left me to run back for a shawl. While I was considering the best way of descending the hill another shell exploded near the foot, and ceasing to hesitate, I flew down, half sliding and running. Before I had reached the

mouth of the cave two more exploded on the side of the hill near me. Breathless and terrified, I found the entrance and ran in, having left one of my slippers on the hillside.

"Our dining, breakfasting and supper hours were quite irregular. When the shells were falling fast the servants came in for safety, and our meals waited for completion some little length of time; again they would fall slowly, with the lapse of many minutes between, and out would start the cooks to their work. Some families had light bread made in large quantities, and subsisted on it with milk—providing their cows were not killed—from one milking time to another without any more cooking, until called on to

replenish. Though most of us lived on corn bread and bacon, served three times a day, the only luxury of the meal consisting in its warmth; I had some flour and frequently had some hard, tough biscuit made from it, there being no soda or yeast to be procured. At this time we could also procure beef. A gentleman friend was kind enough to offer me his camp bed, a narrow spring mattress, which fitted within the contracted cave very comfortably; another had his tent-fly stretched over the mouth of our residence, to shield us from the sun; and then I was the recipient of many favors, and under obligations to many gentlemen of the army for delicate and kind attentions, and in looking back to my trials at that

time, I shall ever remember with gratitude the kind news with which they strove to ward off every deprivation. And so I went regularly to work, keeping house under ground. Our new habitation was an excavation made in the earth, and branching six feet from the entrance, forming a cave in the shape of a T. In one of the wings my bed fitted; the other I used as a kind of dressing-room; in this the earth had been cut down a foot or two below the floor of the main cave; I could stand erect here, and when tired of sitting in other portions of my residence I lowered myself into it and stood impassively resting at full height—one of the variations in the still shell expectant life.

"Caves were the fashion, the rage, over besieged Vicksburg. Negroes, who understood their business, hired themselves out to dig them at from \$30 to \$50, according to the size. Many persons considering different localities unsafe, would sell them to others who had been less fortunate or less provident, and so great was the demand for cave workmen that a new branch of industry sprang up and became popular, particularly as the personal safety of the workmen was secured, and money withal."

Mrs. Fry on Umbrellas.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Fry, "umbrellas have a good deal of character, after all. They express themselves very well; much better than their owners sometimes. I can tell, sitting at a window of a cloudy day, just where every passing umbrella comes from. People can deceive you by assuming false expressions, but umbrellas can't."

"That thin, black, genteel, silk umbrella, coming up the street, can't be more than a month old. It's a young umbrella, bought in a dry season, and only used out for the first time. If it was older, or had been seen by many friends, it wouldn't look as it does now; it would have been borrowed and smashed."

"That blue thing, now, with a hole in the top and stray bones sticking out of it, is the umbrella a friend lent you. It has the look; I'd know it anywhere. You were caught there in the rain, and she said: 'It's a shame to spoil that sweet bonnet; I'll try to find an umbrella!' and you know of two black silks, a gingham and an alpaca, and hope for one. But no; the thing was the product of her researches. It is an umbrella kept to lend a friend. That is bad enough."

"But a neighbor's loan of an umbrella is always worse. Only two of the points are fastened to the whalebone; the top has been fastened on with a piece of old wire. The string, of course, is off; and when the sun comes shining out, and you want to shut it down, it forms a bulgy bag, at which people stare and grin. And no wonder—it is full of holes! The handle is broken short in the middle; and I have had one that had a long, sharp nail in it to hold it by! That was lent me by my landlady, a Jewess."

"The umbrella that has been stolen might as well have pickpocket placarded upon it. It is always shabby-genteel. People watch their umbrellas well in the first gloss of newness, and stolen umbrellas are not cared for as they have been, because they cost their owners nothing but a prick of conscience, and conscience doesn't amount to much in 1864."



THE LATE BRIG.-GEN. JOSEPH G. TOTTEN, U. S. A.

It generally has a white ivory handle—perhaps the handle is the temptation—and the present possessor is always very careful to put it in dark corners, or sit before it, lest, unawares, the owner should enter. Sometimes the stolen umbrella has a silver plate on the handle, from which the name has been carefully scraped with a penknife.

"Some people never lose their umbrellas, because they always carry them rain or shine, and choose such odd ones that they could be sworn to anywhere after a passing glance. Your Quaker aunt, from Philadelphia, has a sad-colored one, shaped like the half of a cantelope, with a large white ring instead of a hook. She has had it twenty years, and is never seen without it. The umbrella is as much a Quaker as your respected aunt.

"Then there is an old bachelor umbrella—umbrellas which never could stand side by side with feminine umbrellas, with ornamental handles. Where bachelors find them we don't know; no man ever has one before he is fifty. These umbrellas are very tall. They are of olive-green silk, thick to richness; they have a ribbed border about them, and a large ebony crook and a sharp metal ferule. The elastic confining them when in repose has a polished tag as large as a pea, and the owner's name is stamped in white on the black handle. It never leaves the old bachelor's hand. Some say he puts it under the pillow when he retires to rest, and one of my acquaintances does hook his on the back of his chair at breakfast as a regular thing.

"It is only equalled by the travelling missionary's umbrella in tenacity of life; but that, poor thing, is a brown cotton, with a handle like a broomstick, a button instead of a ferule, and big white blotches where it has been darned on.

"Oh, don't tell me," continued Mrs. Pry, "I know the character of an umbrella wherever I meet it as well as Mr. Fowler knows a man's disposition by his bumps—and a great deal better."

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